DAWN OF THE AUTOBOTS

THE TRANSFORMERS

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

VOLUME 6

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Special thanks to Hasbro's Clint Chapman, Heather Hopkins, Jerry Jivoin, Joshua Lamb, Ed Lane, Mark Weber, and Michael Kelly for their invaluable assistance.

ISBN: 9781623024024 DIGITAL

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Originally published as THE TRANSFORMERS: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE issues #28–33.

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☐ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #28 COVER A

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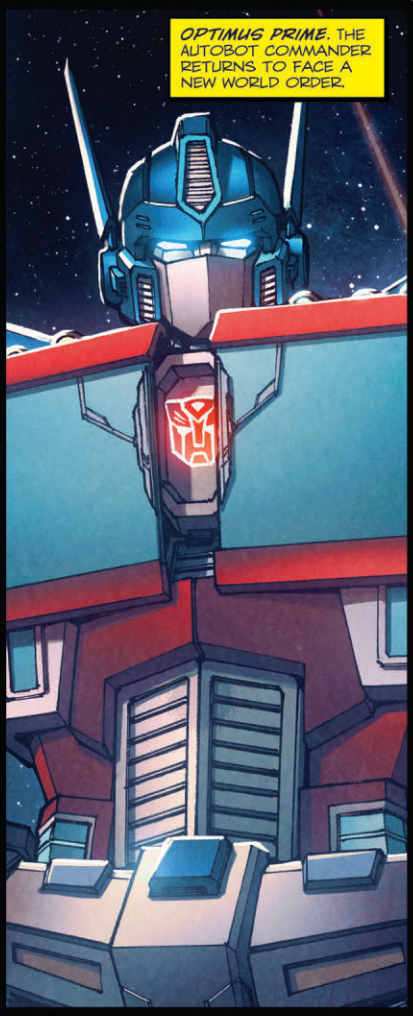
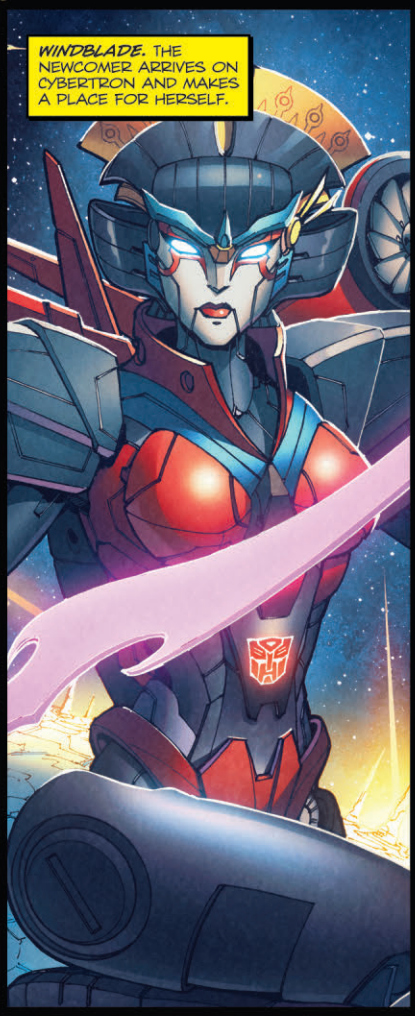
PREVIOUSLY

THE UNIVERSE NEARLY CAME TO ITS END, BUT CYBERTRON UNITED AND THE DAY WAS SAVED BY THE COMBINED FORCES OF THE AUTOBOTS, DECEPTICONS, AND SOME NEW ARRIVALS.

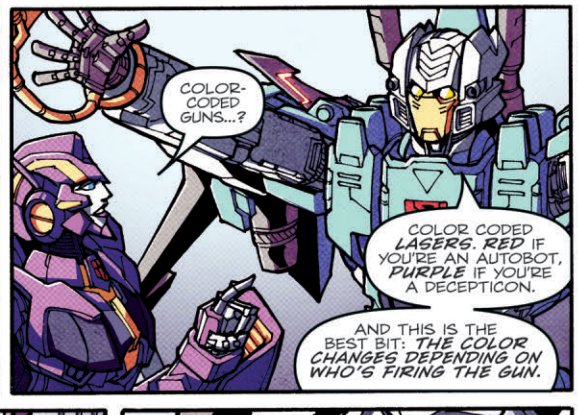


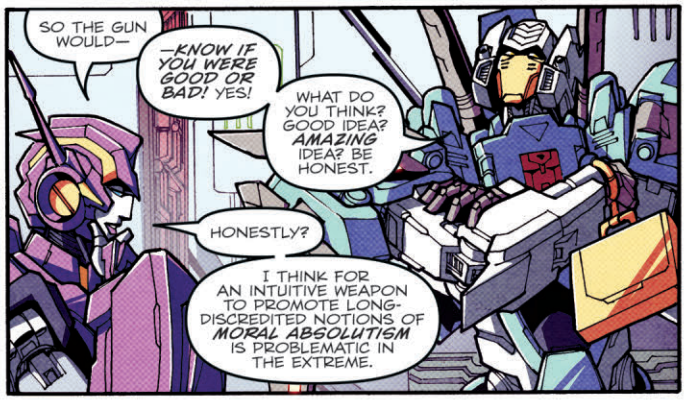


SIX MONTHS LATER

THE LOST LIGHT
AAAAAND... WE'RE BACK!
YOU WERE AGES.
SORRY, BRAINSTORM— I HAD TO POP DOWN TO THE FUEL FURNACE.
SOME NUCLEON RODS HAVE DISAPPEARED AND THE PYROBOTS WERE SHOUTING AT ME.
WELL, THEY ARE FIERY CHARACTERS...
HA!
YES! "FIERY." HA-HA! A "FIERY TEMPERAMENT."
BECAUSE PYROBOTS AND FIRE, RIGHT?
...RIGHT.

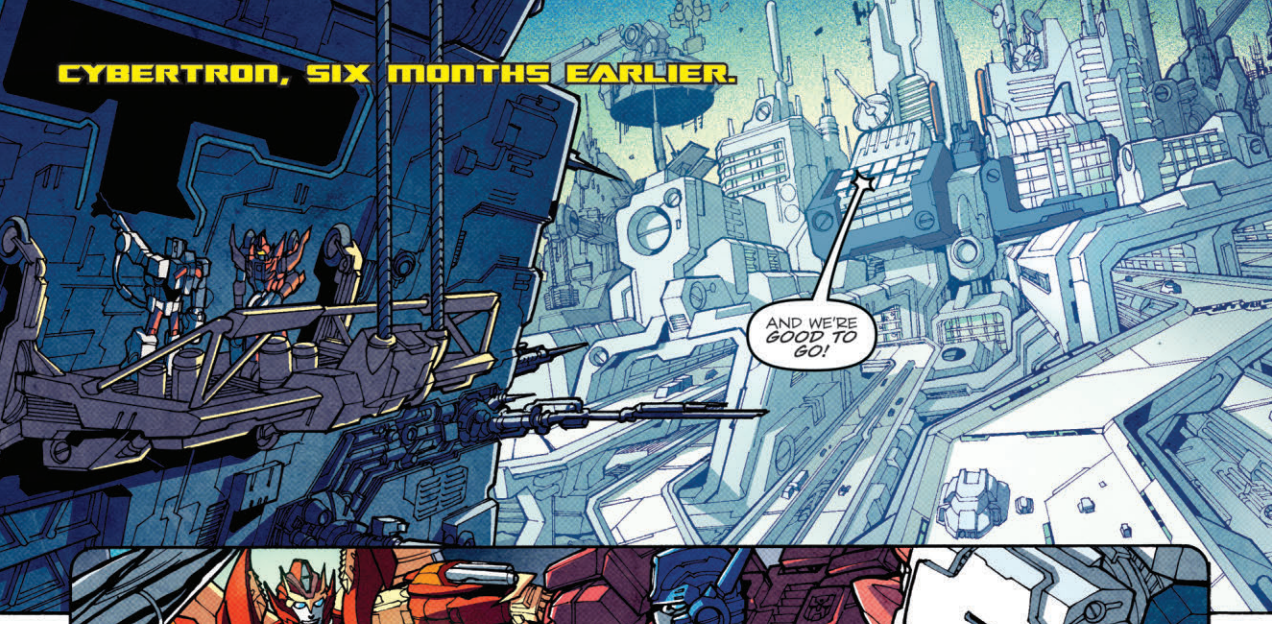
ANYWAY, YOU WERE TELLING ME ABOUT YOUR NEW C.C. GUN...
OKAY, SO IMAGINE YOU'RE IN BATTLE—BUT EVERYTHING'S HAPPENING SO FAST YOU CAN'T MAKE OUT ANYONE'S INSIGNIA! YOU'RE BADGE-BLIND!
GOOD GRIEF. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT WAS A THING...
MY QUESTION, NAUTICA, IS THIS: HOW CAN YOU TELL FRIEND FROM FOE?

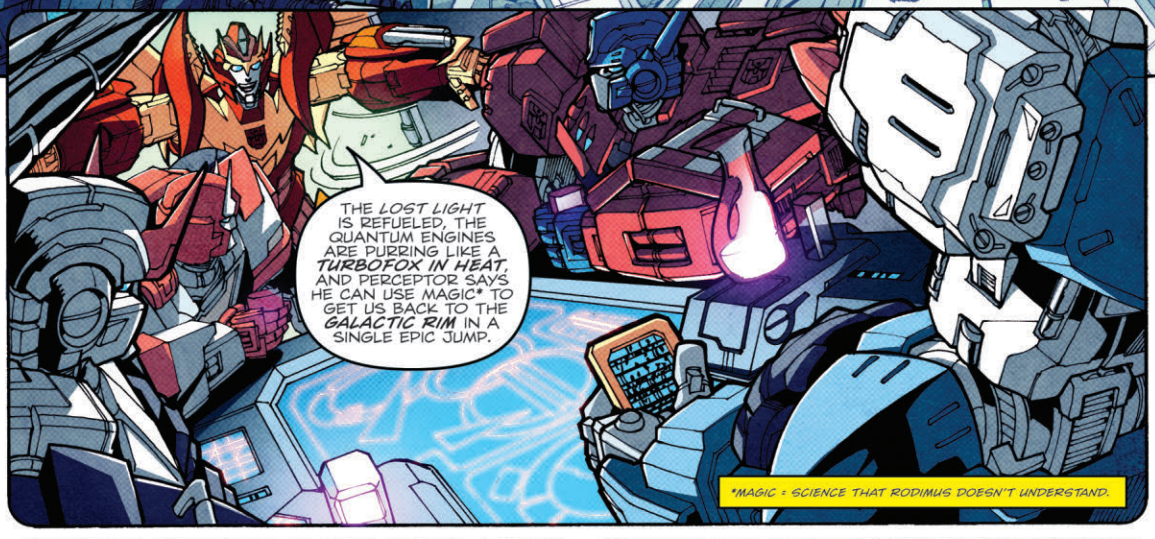

COLOR-CODED GUNS...?
COLOR CODED LASERS. RED IF YOU'RE AN AUTOBOT, PURPLE IF YOU'RE A DECEPTICON.
AND THIS IS THE BEST BIT: THE COLOR CHANGES DEPENDING ON WHO'S FIRING THE GUN.


SO THE GUN WOULD—
—KNOW IF YOU WERE GOOD OR BAD! YES!
WHAT DO YOU THINK? GOOD IDEA? AMAZING IDEA? BE HONEST.
HONESTLY?
I THINK FOR AN INTUITIVE WEAPON TO PROMOTE LONG-DISCREDITED NOTIONS OF MORAL ABSOLUTISM IS PROBLEMATIC IN THE EXTREME.

...
...
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE RED AND PURPLE...

WHAT'S HAPPENING OVER THERE? THAT'S... YOU KNOW.
THE PSYCHIATRIST WITH THE TOYS. THE BOOKLOVER. THAT'S HIS OFFICE.
RUNG. AND THEY'RE COLLECTIBLES. COLLECTIBLE... TOYS.
AND THE EAVESDROPPERS?
OH YEAH, I FORGOT—YOU INTELLECTUAL TYPES DON'T READ THE LOST LIGHT INSIDER, DO YOU?
IF YOU DID, YOU'D KNOW THAT TODAY'S THE BIG DAY...
"...THE CAPTAIN'S HAVING HIS HEAD EXAMINED."
AND WHEN DID YOU FIRST DECIDE THAT THE UNIVERSE NEEDED "DOMINATING"?
WORLD, SHUT YOUR MOUTH
PART 1: TOWARDS PEACE
"NOTHING IS EASIER THAN TO DENOUNCE THE EVILDOER; NOTHING IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN TO UNDERSTAND HIM."
—FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY


CYBERTRON, SIX MONTHS EARLIER.
AND WE'RE GOOD TO GO!

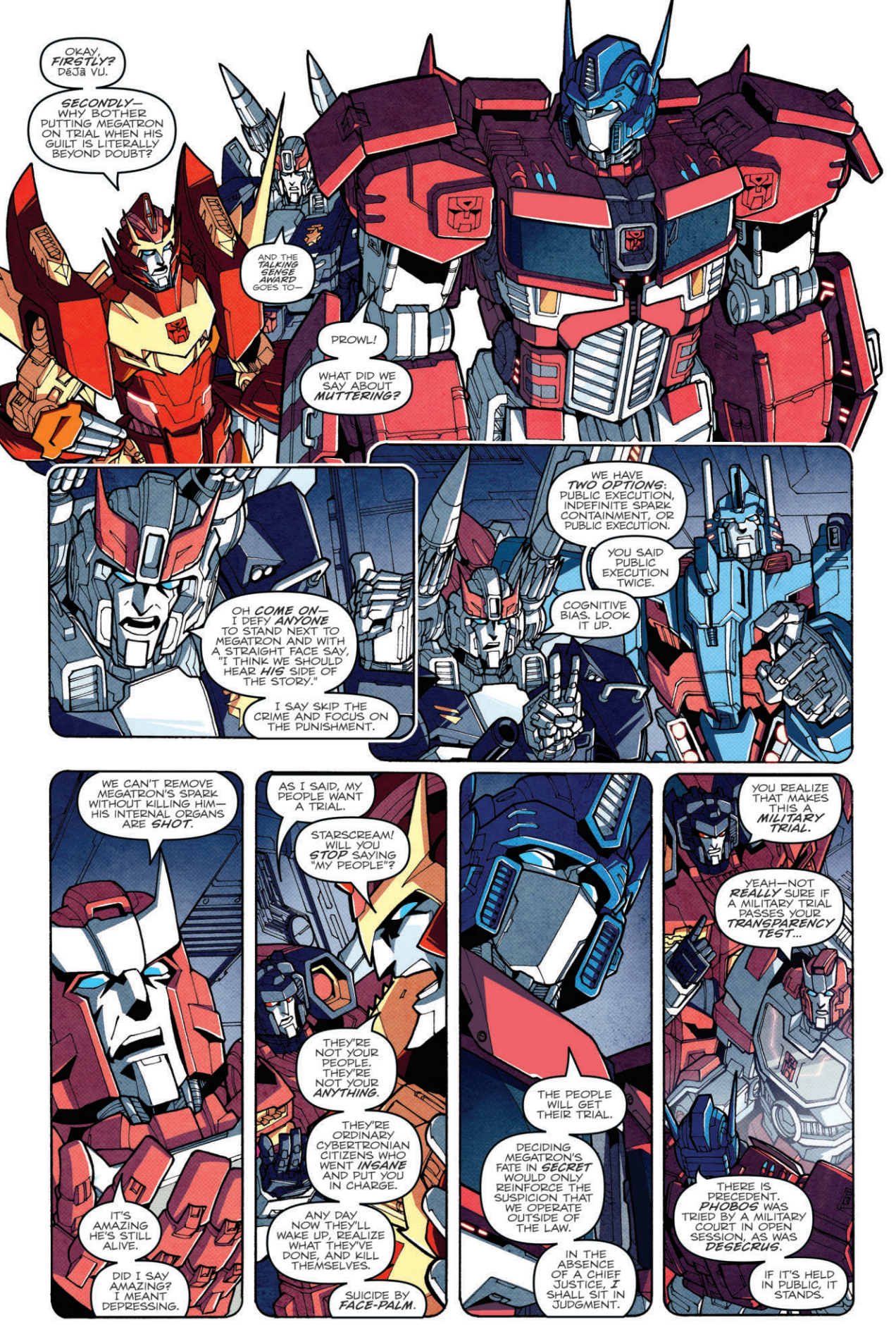

THE LOST LIGHT IS REFUELED, THE QUANTUM ENGINES ARE PURRING LIKE A TURBOFOX IN HEAT, AND PERCEPTOR SAYS HE CAN USE MAGIC* TO GET US BACK TO THE GALACTIC RIM IN A SINGLE EPIC JUMP.
*MAGIC = SCIENCE THAT RODIMUS DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

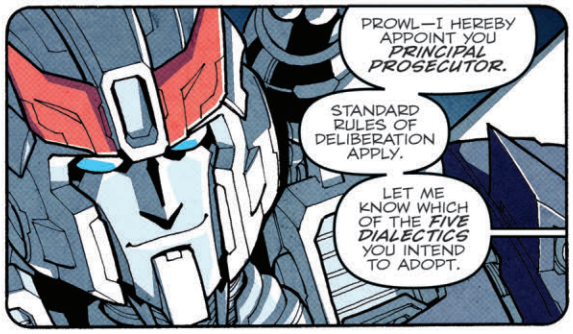
GOODBYE, OPTIMUS!
I'LL CALL YOU WHEN WE GET TO CYBERUTOPIA—PROMISE.

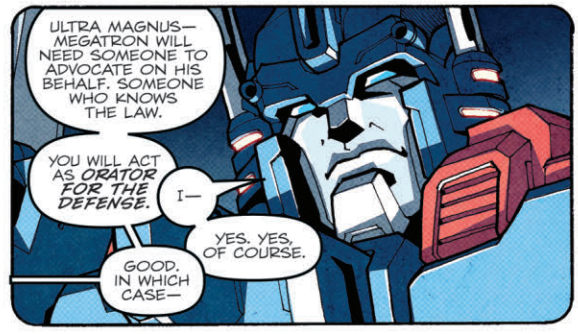
PROWL!
WISH US LUCK, BECAUSE WHO KNOWS?
MAYBE THE KNIGHTS CAN HELP US FIND A CURE FOR YOUR PERSONALITY.
AND IF YOU GET CROSS WHILE WE'RE AWAY, REMEMBER: IT'S NOT THE TABLE'S FAULT.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? PRIME WANTED US HERE TEN MINUTES AGO.

US? SINCE WHEN WAS STARSCREAM ONE OF US?

SORRY, RODIMUS.
NO ONE LEAVES THE PLANET UNTIL WE'VE DECIDED WHAT TO DO WITH MEGATRON.
MY PEOPLE WANT A TRIAL.

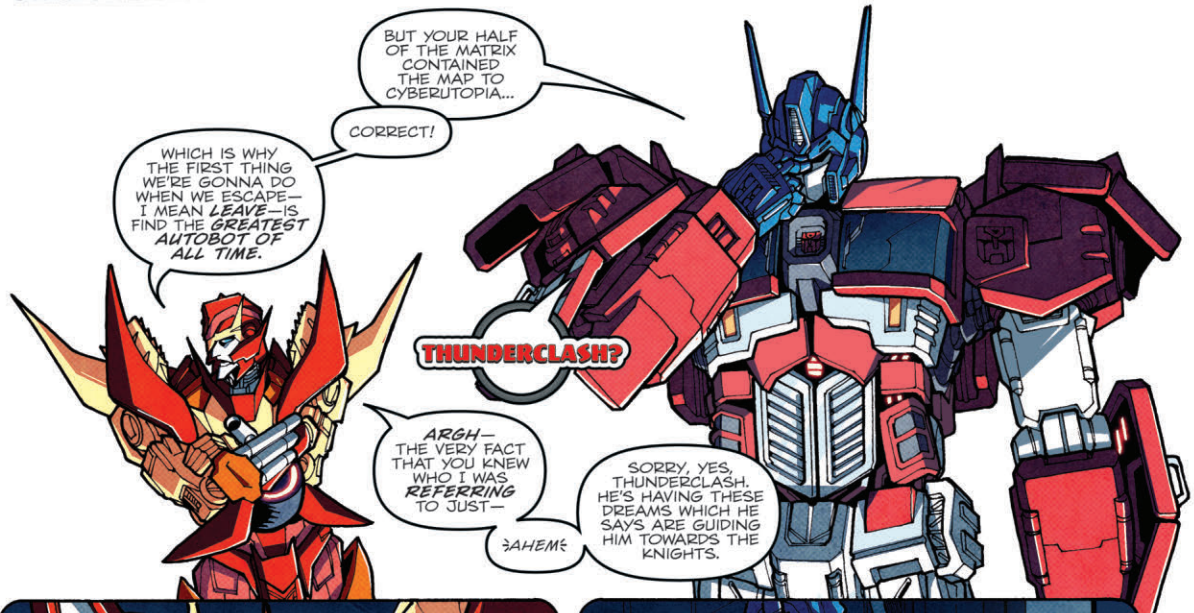

OKAY, FIRSTLY? DÉJÀ VU.
SECONDLY— WHY BOTHER PUTTING MEGATRON ON TRIAL WHEN HIS GUILT IS LITERALLY BEYOND DOUBT?
AND THE TALKING SENSE AWARD GOES TO—
PROWL!
WHAT DID WE SAY ABOUT MUTTERING?
OH COME ON— I DEFY ANYONE TO STAND NEXT TO MEGATRON AND WITH A STRAIGHT FACE SAY, "I THINK WE SHOULD HEAR HIS SIDE OF THE STORY."
I SAY SKIP THE CRIME AND FOCUS ON THE PUNISHMENT.
WE HAVE TWO OPTIONS: PUBLIC EXECUTION, INDEFINITE SPARK CONTAINMENT, OR PUBLIC EXECUTION.
YOU SAID PUBLIC EXECUTION TWICE.
COGNITIVE BIAS. LOOK IT UP.
WE CAN'T REMOVE MEGATRON'S SPARK WITHOUT KILLING HIM— HIS INTERNAL ORGANS ARE SHOT.
IT'S AMAZING HE'S STILL ALIVE.
DID I SAY AMAZING? I MEANT DEPRESSING.
AS I SAID, MY PEOPLE WANT A TRIAL.
STARSCREAM! WILL YOU STOP SAYING "MY PEOPLE"?
THEY'RE NOT YOUR PEOPLE. THEY'RE NOT YOUR ANYTHING.
THEY'RE ORDINARY CYBERTRONIAN CITIZENS WHO WENT INSANE AND PUT YOU IN CHARGE.
ANY DAY NOW THEY'LL WAKE UP, REALIZE WHAT THEY'VE DONE, AND KILL THEMSELVES.
SUICIDE BY FACE-PALM.
THE PEOPLE WILL GET THEIR TRIAL.
DECIDING MEGATRON'S FATE IN SECRET WOULD ONLY REINFORCE THE SUSPICION THAT WE OPERATE OUTSIDE OF THE LAW.
IN THE ABSENCE OF A CHIEF JUSTICE, I SHALL SIT IN JUDGMENT.
YOU REALIZE THAT MAKES THIS A MILITARY TRIAL.
YEAH—NOT REALLY SURE IF A MILITARY TRIAL PASSES YOUR TRANSPARENCY TEST...
THERE IS PRECEDENT. PHOBOS WAS TRIED BY A MILITARY COURT IN OPEN SESSION, AS WAS DEGECRUS.
IF IT'S HELD IN PUBLIC, IT STANDS.


PROWL—I HEREBY APPOINT YOU PRINCIPAL PROSECUTOR.
STANDARD RULES OF DELIBERATION APPLY.
LET ME KNOW WHICH OF THE FIVE DIALECTICS YOU INTEND TO ADOPT.


ULTRA MAGNUS—MEGATRON WILL NEED SOMEONE TO ADVOCATE ON HIS BEHALF. SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE LAW.
YOU WILL ACT AS ORATOR FOR THE DEFENSE.
I—
YES. YES, OF COURSE.
GOOD. IN WHICH CASE—

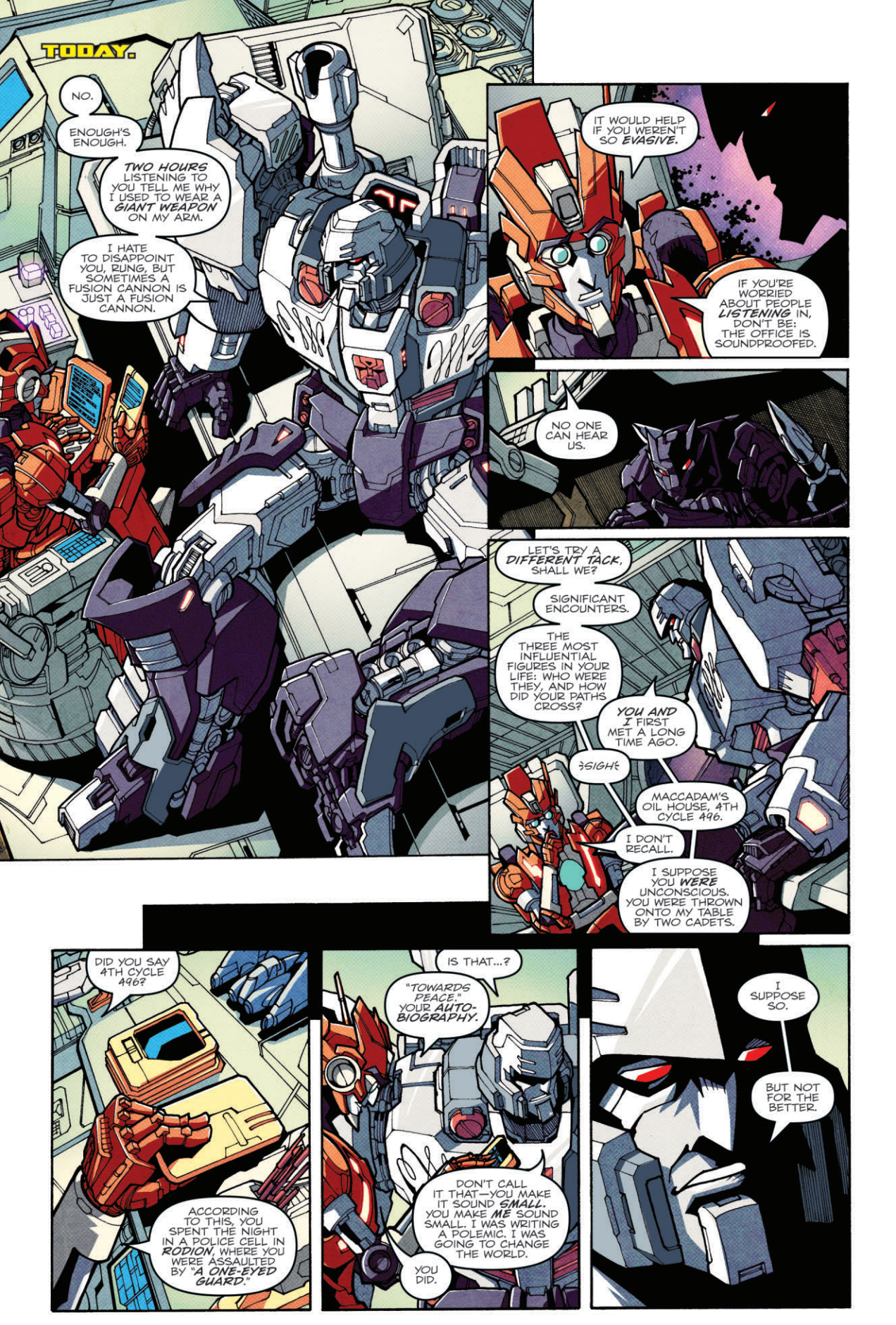
"—WE WILL RECONVENE IN AN HOUR TO DISCUSS ORDER OF COUNSEL."
YOU SEEM VERY EAGER TO RESUME YOUR QUEST.
YOU KNOW ME—NEVER KNOWINGLY PATIENT.
PERHAPS YOU COULD GIVE ME A BRIEF UPDATE ON YOUR PROGRESS TO DATE.

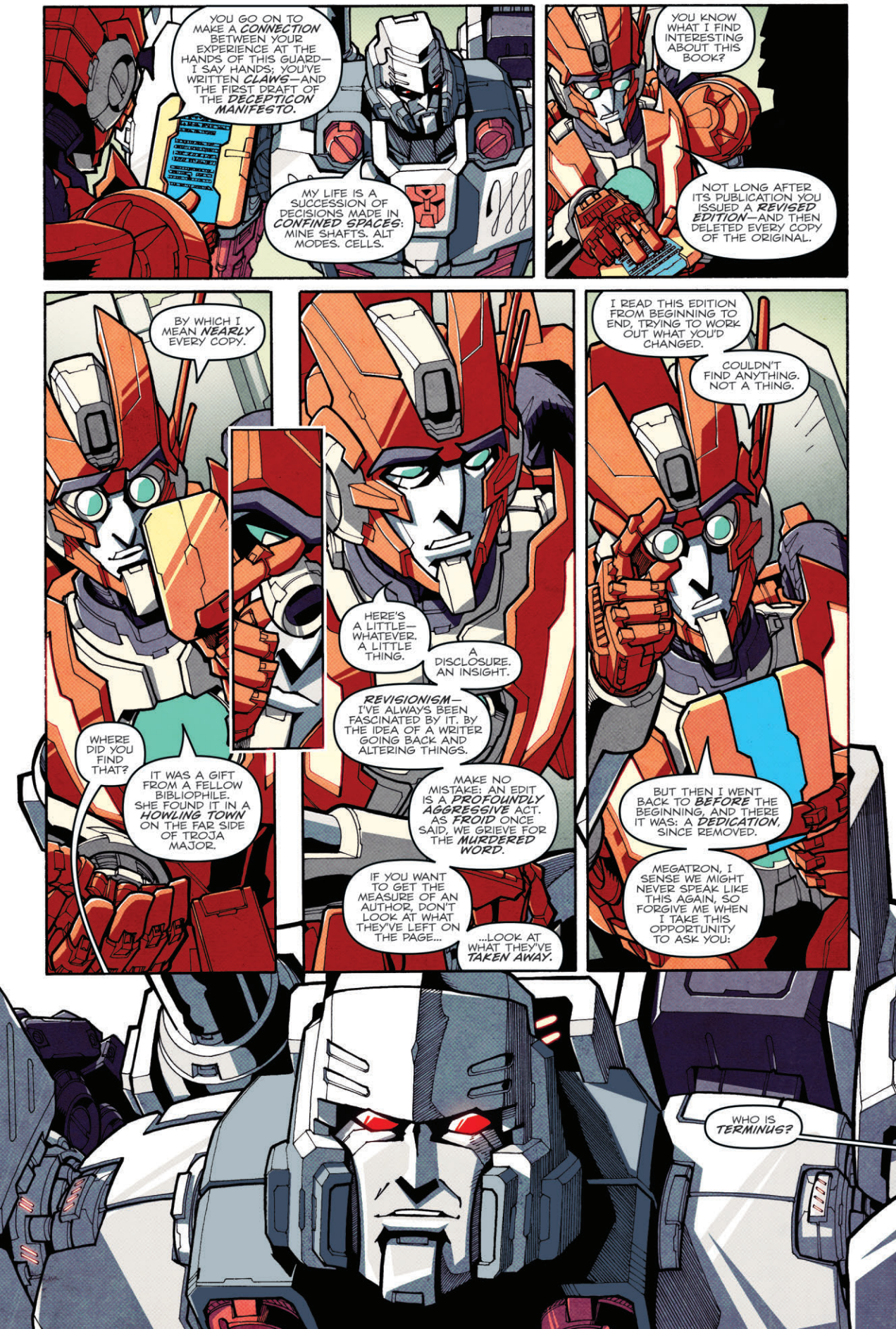
WE STOPPED TYREST, SAVED THE CIRCLE OF LIGHT, AND BROKE THE MATRIX.
THERE: 10 WORDS.
YOU BROKE THE MATRIX?
12 WORDS. MY MISTAKE.
YOU BROKE THE MATRIX?
STILL FOCUSING ON THAT, ARE WE?
YOU BROKE THE MA—
MY HALF OF THE MATRIX. IT SHATTERED WHEN I DEACTIVATED TYREST'S KILLSWITCH. FRANKLY, IT WASN'T THAT ROBUST.

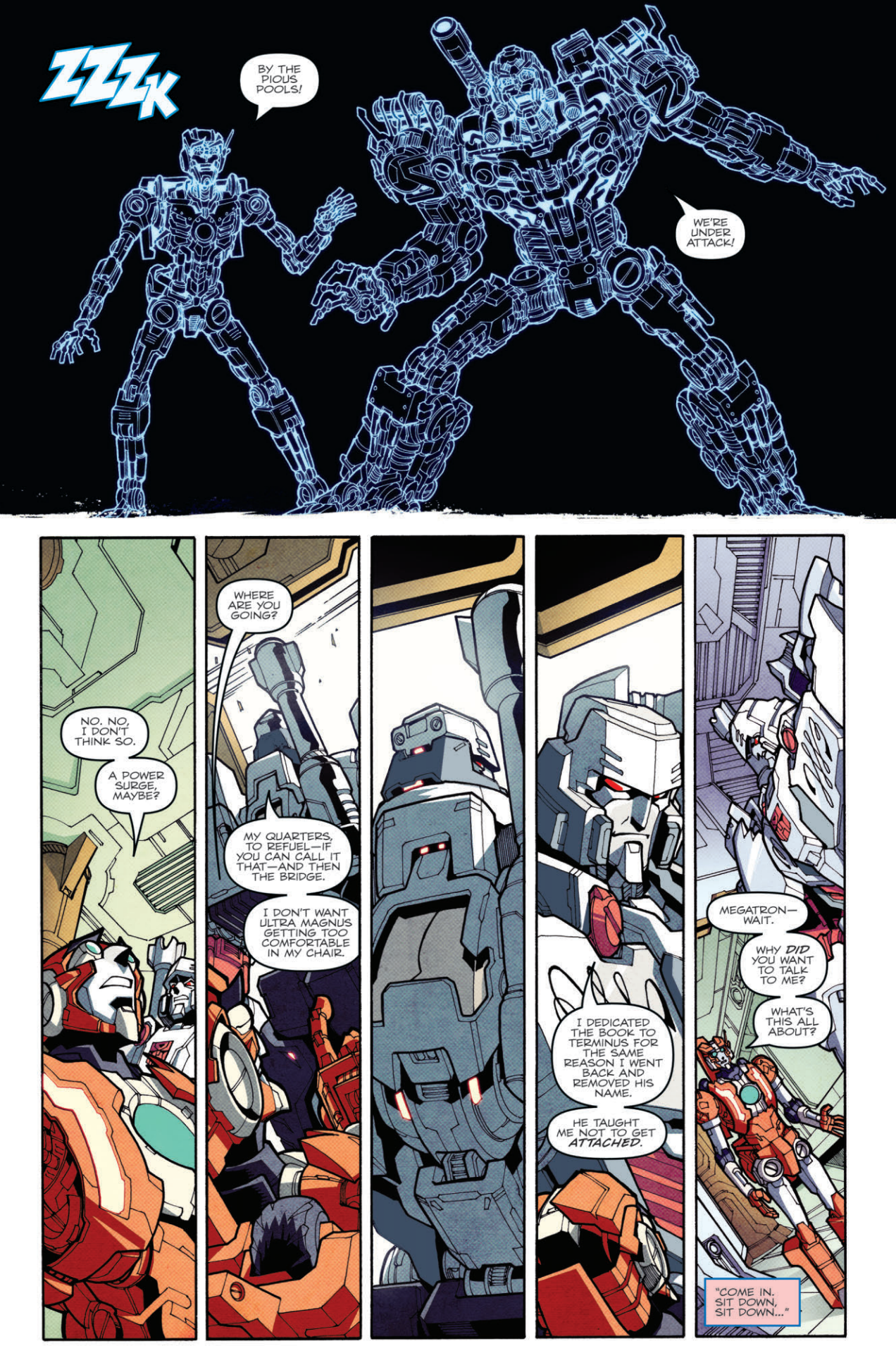

BUT YOUR HALF OF THE MATRIX CONTAINED THE MAP TO CYBERUTOPIA...
CORRECT!
WHICH IS WHY THE FIRST THING WE'RE GONNA DO WHEN WE ESCAPE—I MEAN LEAVE—IS FIND THE GREATEST AUTOBOT OF ALL TIME.
THUNDERCLASH?
ARGH—THE VERY FACT THAT YOU KNEW WHO I WAS REFERRING TO JUST—
AHEM
SORRY, YES, THUNDERCLASH. HE'S HAVING THESE DREAMS WHICH HE SAYS ARE GUIDING HIM TOWARDS THE KNIGHTS.

LOOK. OPTIMUS. I KNOW THAT YOU WANT US ALL HERE IN CASE WE NEED TO TESTIFY AT THE TRIAL OR WHATEVER—
—BUT THUNDERCLASH HAS GONE ALL QUIET ON US AND I'M REALLY, REALLY WORRIED ABOUT HIM.

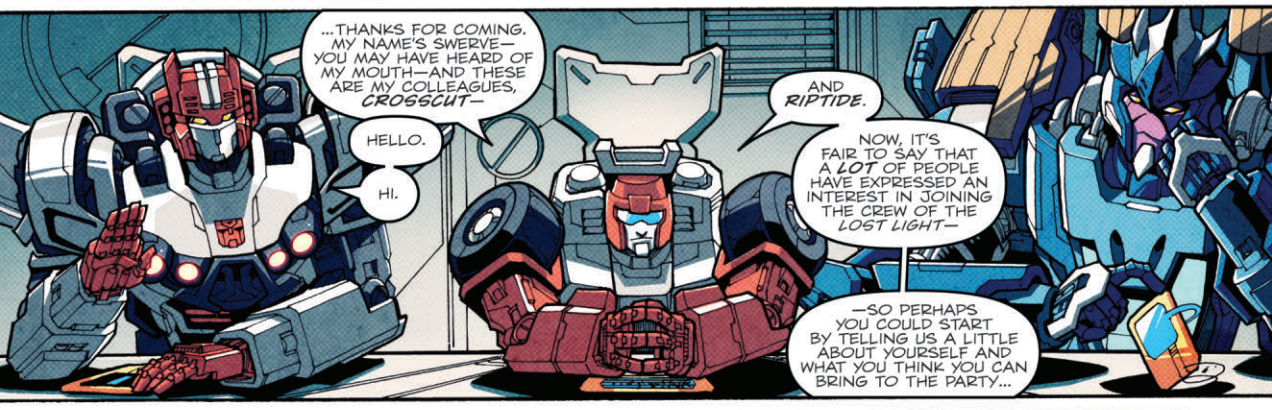
YOU'RE RIGHT: I DO WANT YOU HERE UNTIL A VERDICT'S BEEN REACHED—BUT MAYBE THERE'S A WAY TO EXPEDITE MATTERS.
COME WITH ME...

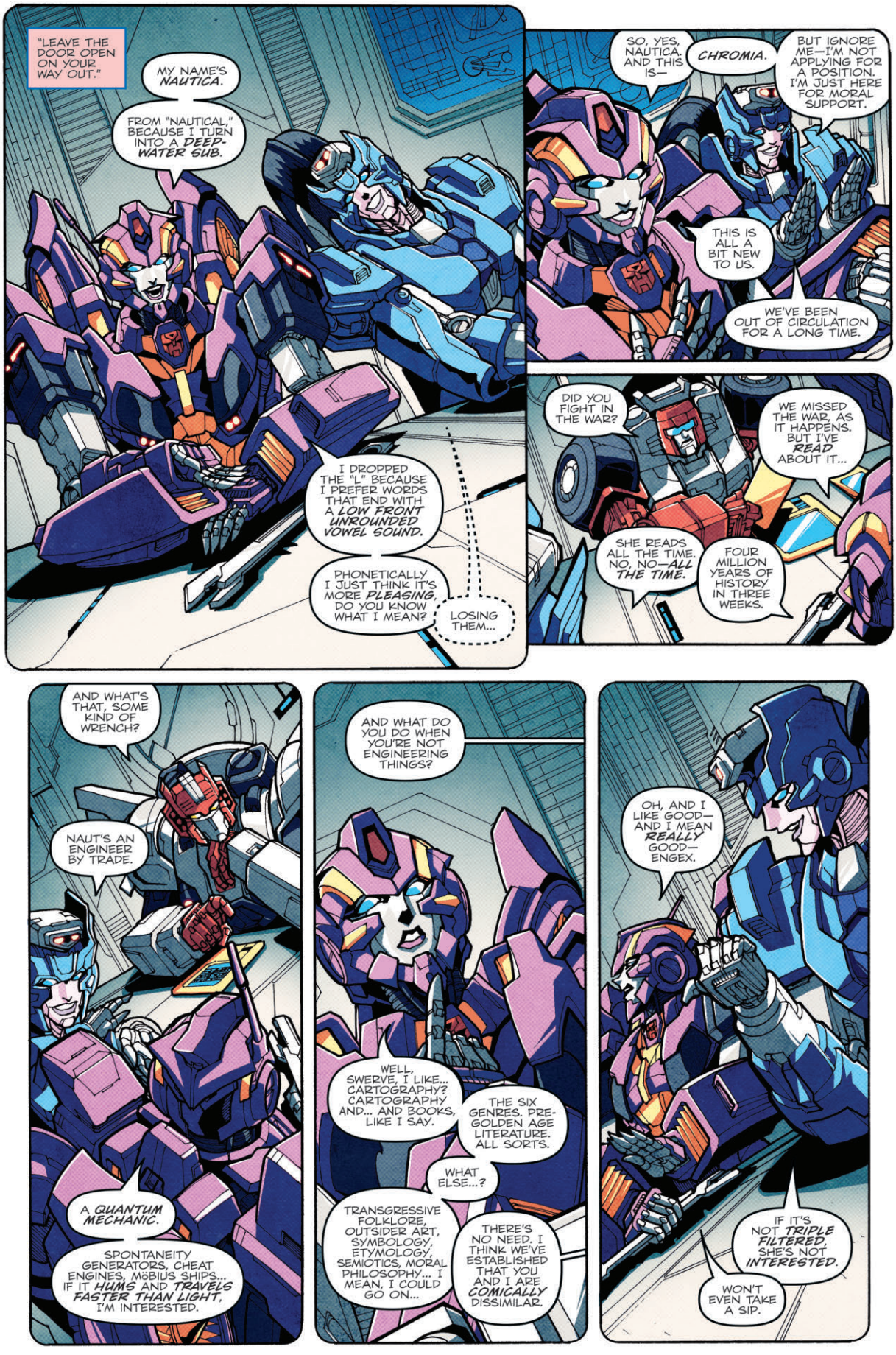

TODAY.
NO.
ENOUGH'S ENOUGH.
TWO HOURS LISTENING TO YOU TELL ME WHY I USED TO WEAR A GIANT WEAPON ON MY ARM.
I HATE TO DISAPPOINT YOU, RUNG, BUT SOMETIMES A FUSION CANNON IS JUST A FUSION CANNON.
IT WOULD HELP IF YOU WEREN'T SO EVASIVE.
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT PEOPLE LISTENING IN, DON'T BE: THE OFFICE IS SOUNDPROOFED.
NO ONE CAN HEAR US.
LET'S TRY A DIFFERENT TACK, SHALL WE?
SIGNIFICANT ENCOUNTERS.
THE THREE MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES IN YOUR LIFE: WHO WERE THEY, AND HOW DID YOUR PATHS CROSS?
YOU AND I FIRST MET A LONG TIME AGO.
SIGH
MACCADAM'S OIL HOUSE, 4TH CYCLE 496.
I DON'T RECALL.
I SUPPOSE YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS. YOU WERE THROWN ONTO MY TABLE BY TWO CADETS.
DID YOU SAY 4TH CYCLE 496?
ACCORDING TO THIS, YOU SPENT THE NIGHT IN A POLICE CELL IN RODION, WHERE YOU WERE ASSAULTED BY "A ONE-EYED GUARD."
IS THAT...?
"TOWARDS PEACE." YOUR AUTO-BIOGRAPHY.
DON'T CALL IT THAT—YOU MAKE IT SOUND SMALL. YOU MAKE ME SOUND SMALL. I WAS WRITING A POLEMIC. I WAS GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD.
YOU DID.
I SUPPOSE SO.
BUT NOT FOR THE BETTER.

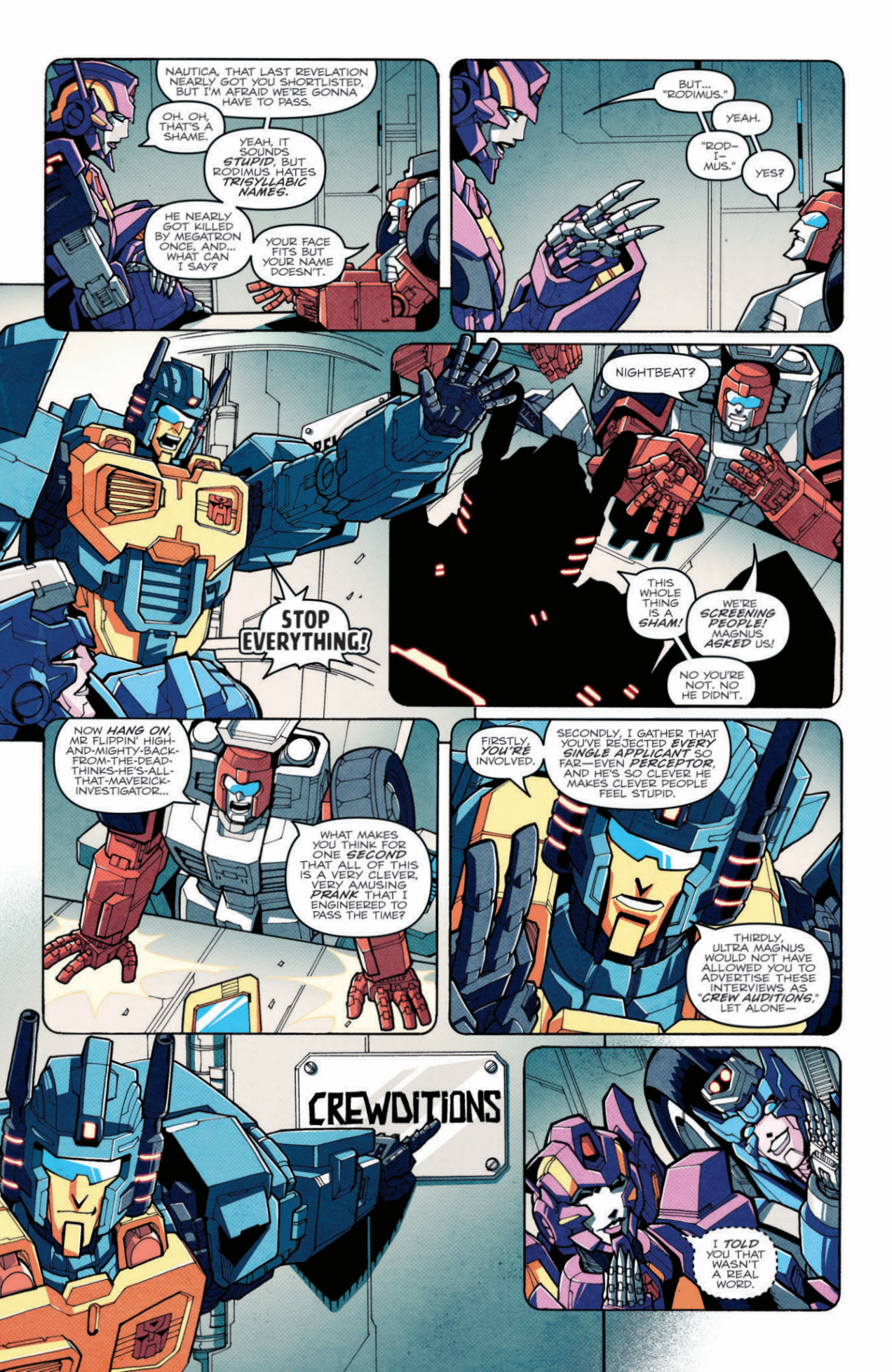

YOU GO ON TO MAKE A CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE HANDS OF THIS GUARD—I SAY HANDS; YOU'VE WRITTEN CLAWS—AND THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE DECEPTICON MANIFESTO.
MY LIFE IS A SUCCESSION OF DECISIONS MADE IN CONFINED SPACES: MINE SHAFTS. ALT MODES. CELLS.
YOU KNOW WHAT I FIND INTERESTING ABOUT THIS BOOK?
NOT LONG AFTER ITS PUBLICATION YOU ISSUED A REVISED EDITION—AND THEN DELETED EVERY COPY OF THE ORIGINAL.
BY WHICH I MEAN NEARLY EVERY COPY.
WHERE DID YOU FIND THAT?
IT WAS A GIFT FROM A FELLOW BIBLIOPHILE. SHE FOUND IT IN A HOWLING TOWN ON THE FAR SIDE OF TROJA MAJOR.
HERE'S A LITTLE—WHATEVER. A LITTLE THING.
A DISCLOSURE. AN INSIGHT.
REVISIONISM—I'VE ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED BY IT. BY THE IDEA OF A WRITER GOING BACK AND ALTERING THINGS.
MAKE NO MISTAKE: AN EDIT IS A PROFOUNDLY AGGRESSIVE ACT. AS FROID ONCE SAID, WE GRIEVE FOR THE MURDERED WORD.
IF YOU WANT TO GET THE MEASURE OF AN AUTHOR, DON'T LOOK AT WHAT THEY'VE LEFT ON THE PAGE...
...LOOK AT WHAT THEY'VE TAKEN AWAY.
I READ THIS EDITION FROM BEGINNING TO END, TRYING TO WORK OUT WHAT YOU'D CHANGED.
COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING. NOT A THING.
BUT THEN I WENT BACK TO BEFORE THE BEGINNING, AND THERE IT WAS: A DEDICATION, SINCE REMOVED.
MEGATRON, I SENSE WE MIGHT NEVER SPEAK LIKE THIS AGAIN, SO FORGIVE ME WHEN I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ASK YOU:
WHO IS TERMINUS?

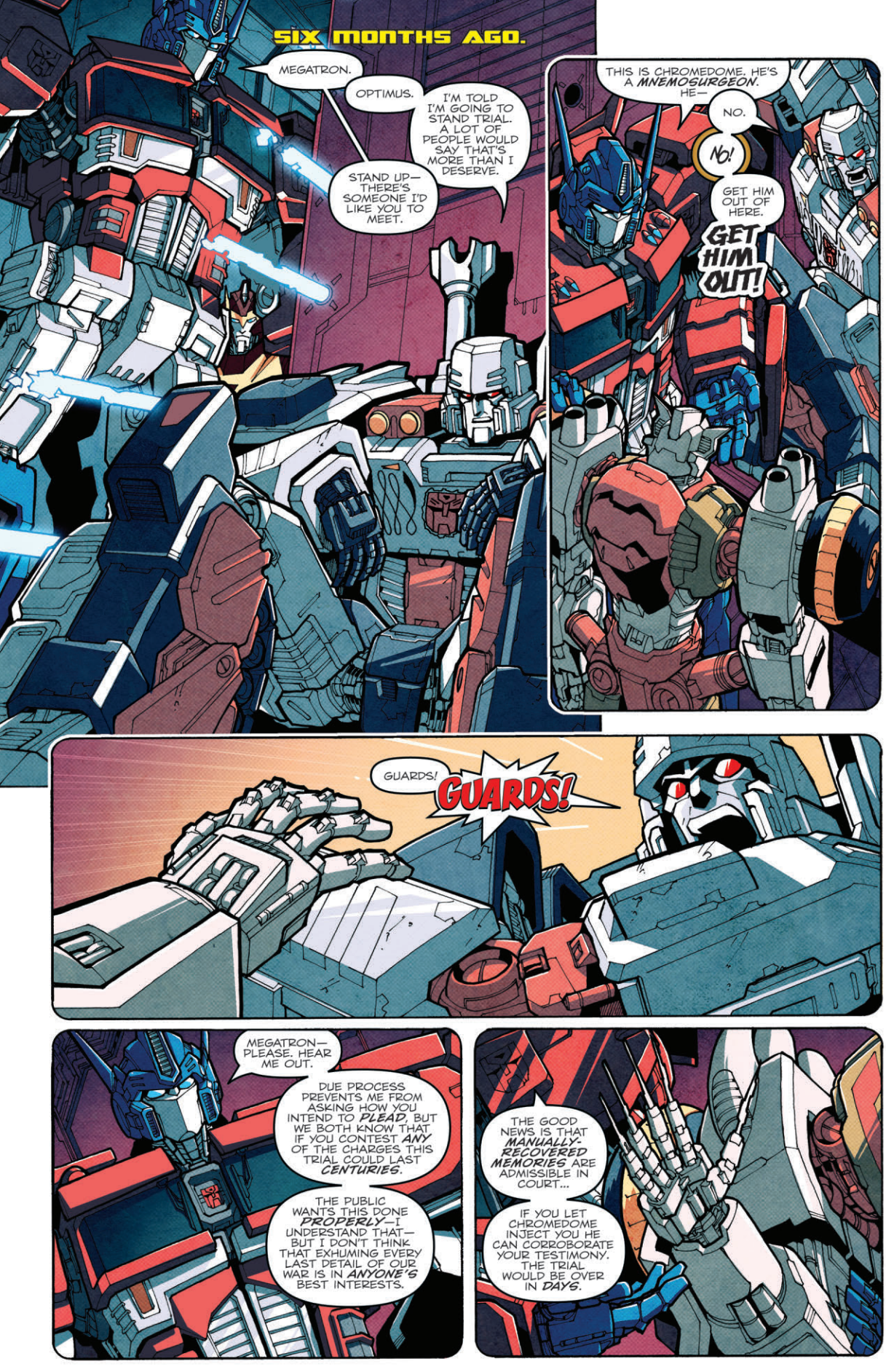

ZZZK
BY THE PIOUS POOLS!
WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!
NO. NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
A POWER SURGE, MAYBE?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
MY QUARTERS, TO REFUEL—IF YOU CAN CALL IT THAT—AND THEN THE BRIDGE.
I DON'T WANT ULTRA MAGNUS GETTING TOO COMFORTABLE IN MY CHAIR.
I DEDICATED THE BOOK TO TERMINUS FOR THE SAME REASON I WENT BACK AND REMOVED HIS NAME.
HE TAUGHT ME NOT TO GET ATTACHED.
MEGATRON—WAIT.
WHY DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME?
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
"COME IN. SIT DOWN, SIT DOWN..."

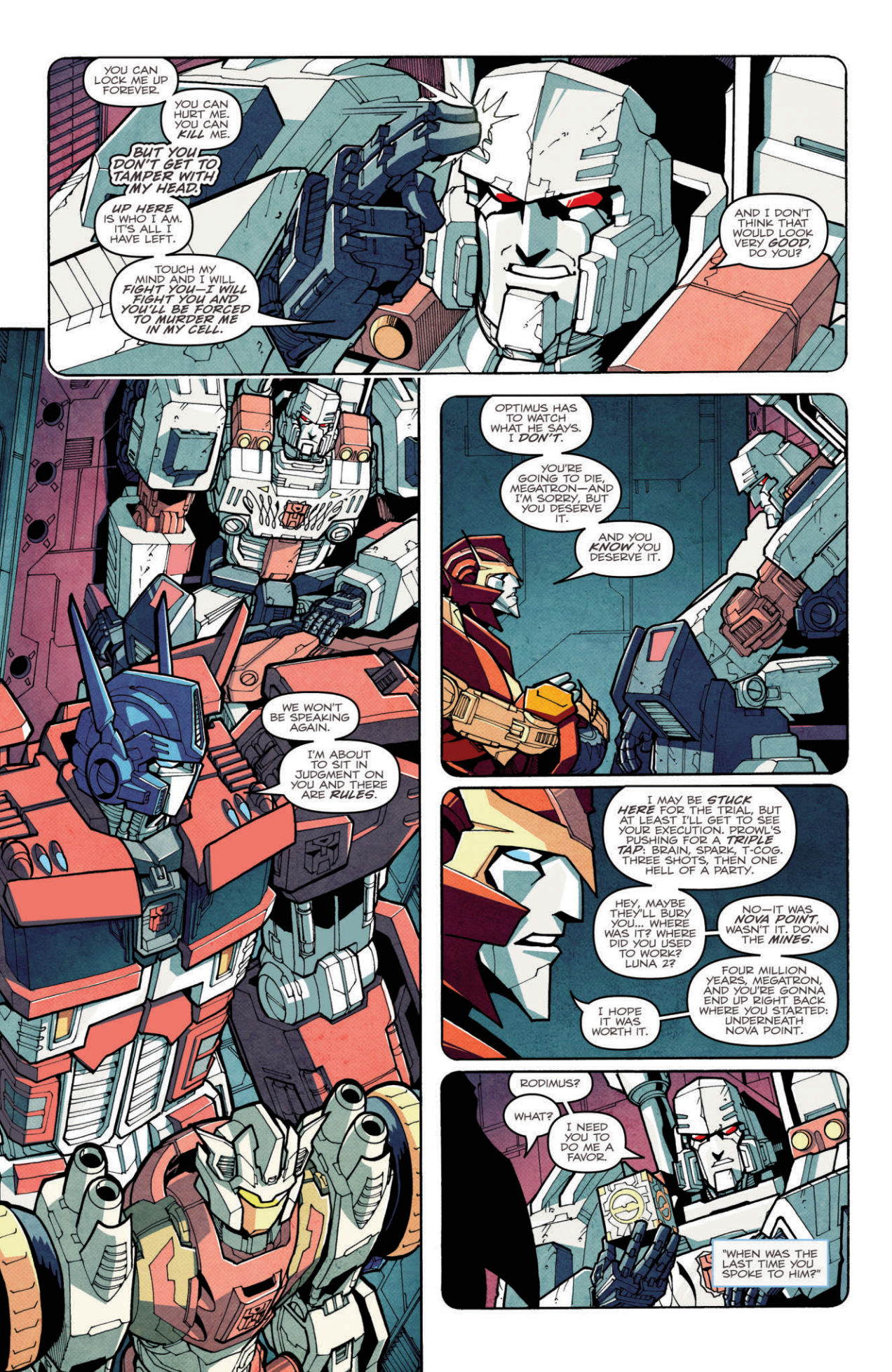
SIX MONTHS AGO




"LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN ON YOUR WAY OUT."
MY NAME'S NAUTICA.
FROM "NAUTICAL," BECAUSE I TURN INTO A DEEP-WATER SUB.
I DROPPED THE "L" BECAUSE I PREFER WORDS THAT END WITH A LOW FRONT UNROUNDED VOWEL SOUND.
PHONETICALLY I JUST THINK IT'S MORE PLEASING, DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
LOSING THEM...
SO, YES, NAUTICA. AND THIS IS—
CHROMIA.
BUT IGNORE ME—I'M NOT APPLYING FOR A POSITION. I'M JUST HERE FOR MORAL SUPPORT.
THIS IS ALL A BIT NEW TO US.
WE'VE BEEN OUT OF CIRCULATION FOR A LONG TIME.
DID YOU FIGHT IN THE WAR?
WE MISSED THE WAR, AS IT HAPPENS. BUT I'VE READ ABOUT IT...
SHE READS ALL THE TIME. NO, NO—ALL THE TIME.
FOUR MILLION YEARS OF HISTORY IN THREE WEEKS.
AND WHAT'S THAT, SOME KIND OF WRENCH?
NAUT'S AN ENGINEER BY TRADE.
A QUANTUM MECHANIC.
SPONTANEITY GENERATORS, CHEAT ENGINES, MÖBIUS SHIPS... IF IT HUMS AND TRAVELS FASTER THAN LIGHT, I'M INTERESTED.
AND WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT ENGINEERING THINGS?
WELL, SWERVE, I LIKE... CARTOGRAPHY? CARTOGRAPHY AND... AND BOOKS, LIKE I SAY.
THE SIX GENRES. PRE-GOLDEN AGE LITERATURE. ALL SORTS.
WHAT ELSE...?
TRANSGRESSIVE FOLKLORE, OUTSIDER ART, SYMBOLOGY, ETYMOLOGY, SEMIOTICS, MORAL PHILOSOPHY... I MEAN, I COULD GO ON...
THERE'S NO NEED. I THINK WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT YOU AND I ARE COMICALLY DISSIMILAR.
OH, AND I LIKE GOOD—AND I MEAN REALLY GOOD—ENGEX.
IF IT'S NOT TRIPLE FILTERED, SHE'S NOT INTERESTED.
WON'T EVEN TAKE A SIP.


NAUTICA, THAT LAST REVELATION NEARLY GOT YOU SHORTLISTED, BUT I'M AFRAID WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO PASS.
OH. OH, THAT'S A SHAME.
YEAH, IT SOUNDS STUPID, BUT RODIMUS HATES TRISYLLABIC NAMES.
HE NEARLY GOT KILLED BY MEGATRON ONCE, AND... WHAT CAN I SAY?
YOUR FACE FITS BUT YOUR NAME DOESN'T.
BUT... "RODIMUS."
YEAH.
"ROD-I-MUS."
YES?
STOP EVERYTHING!
NIGHTBEAT?
THIS WHOLE THING IS A SHAM!
WE'RE SCREENING PEOPLE! MAGNUS ASKED US!
NO YOU'RE NOT. NO HE DIDN'T.
NOW HANG ON, MR FLIPPIN' HIGH-AND-MIGHTY-BACK-FROM-THE-DEAD-THINKS-HE'S-ALL-THAT-MAVERICK-INVESTIGATOR...
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK FOR ONE SECOND THAT ALL OF THIS IS A VERY CLEVER, VERY AMUSING PRANK THAT I ENGINEERED TO PASS THE TIME?
FIRSTLY, YOU'RE INVOLVED.
SECONDLY, I GATHER THAT YOU'VE REJECTED EVERY SINGLE APPLICANT SO FAR—EVEN PERCEPTOR, AND HE'S SO CLEVER HE MAKES CLEVER PEOPLE FEEL STUPID.
THIRDLY, ULTRA MAGNUS WOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO ADVERTISE THESE INTERVIEWS AS "CREW AUDITIONS," LET ALONE—
CREWDITIONS
I TOLD YOU THAT WASN'T A REAL WORD.

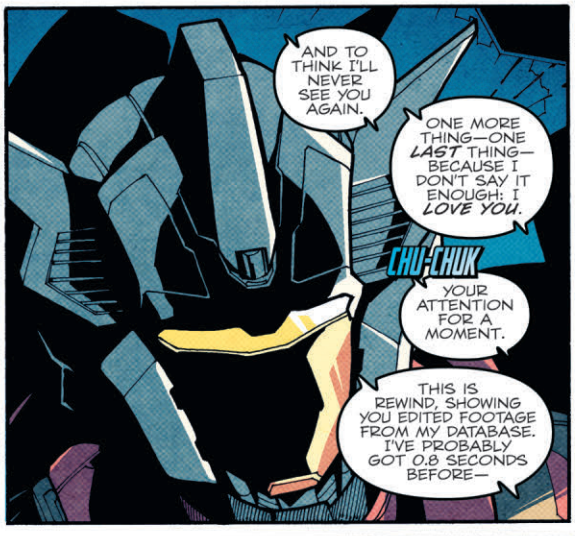

SIX MONTHS AGO.
MEGATRON.
OPTIMUS.
I'M TOLD I'M GOING TO STAND TRIAL. A LOT OF PEOPLE WOULD SAY THAT'S MORE THAN I DESERVE.
STAND UP— THERE'S SOMEONE I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET.
THIS IS CHROMEDOME. HE'S A MNEMOSURGEON. HE—
NO.
NO!
GET HIM OUT OF HERE.
GET HIM OUT!
GUARDS!
GUARDS!
MEGATRON— PLEASE. HEAR ME OUT.
DUE PROCESS PREVENTS ME FROM ASKING HOW YOU INTEND TO PLEAD, BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT IF YOU CONTEST ANY OF THE CHARGES THIS TRIAL COULD LAST CENTURIES.
THE PUBLIC WANTS THIS DONE PROPERLY—I UNDERSTAND THAT— BUT I DON'T THINK THAT EXHUMING EVERY LAST DETAIL OF OUR WAR IS IN ANYONE'S BEST INTERESTS.
THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT MANUALLY-RECOVERED MEMORIES ARE ADMISSIBLE IN COURT...
IF YOU LET CHROMEDOME INJECT YOU HE CAN CORROBORATE YOUR TESTIMONY. THE TRIAL WOULD BE OVER IN DAYS.


YOU CAN LOCK ME UP FOREVER.
YOU CAN HURT ME. YOU CAN KILL ME.
BUT YOU DON'T GET TO TAMPER WITH MY HEAD.
UP HERE IS WHO I AM. IT'S ALL I HAVE LEFT.
TOUCH MY MIND AND I WILL FIGHT YOU—I WILL FIGHT YOU AND YOU'LL BE FORCED TO MURDER ME IN MY CELL.
AND I DON'T THINK THAT WOULD LOOK VERY GOOD, DO YOU?
WE WON'T BE SPEAKING AGAIN.
I'M ABOUT TO SIT IN JUDGMENT ON YOU AND THERE ARE RULES.
OPTIMUS HAS TO WATCH WHAT HE SAYS. I DON'T.
YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, MEGATRON—AND I'M SORRY, BUT YOU DESERVE IT.
AND YOU KNOW YOU DESERVE IT.
I MAY BE STUCK HERE FOR THE TRIAL, BUT AT LEAST I'LL GET TO SEE YOUR EXECUTION. PROWL'S PUSHING FOR A TRIPLE TAP: BRAIN, SPARK, T-COG. THREE SHOTS, THEN ONE HELL OF A PARTY.
HEY, MAYBE THEY'LL BURY YOU... WHERE WAS IT? WHERE DID YOU USED TO WORK? LUNA 2?
NO—IT WAS NOVA POINT, WASN'T IT. DOWN THE MINES.
FOUR MILLION YEARS, MEGATRON, AND YOU'RE GONNA END UP RIGHT BACK WHERE YOU STARTED: UNDERNEATH NOVA POINT.
I HOPE IT WAS WORTH IT.
RODIMUS?
WHAT?
I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
"WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SPOKE TO HIM?"

TODAY.
PROPERLY SPOKE TO HIM? OH, MONTHS AGO.
BEFORE HE PUNCHED PROWL.
CHROMEDOME PUNCHED PROWL?
APPARENTLY. AND THEN THERE WAS THE TRIAL, AND MEGATRON'S GRAND STATEMENT, AND EVER SINCE HE'S BEEN HIDING IN HIS ROOM.
I THOUGHT HE WAS STARTING TO COME TO TERMS WITH REWIND'S DEATH—
FUEL FURNACE

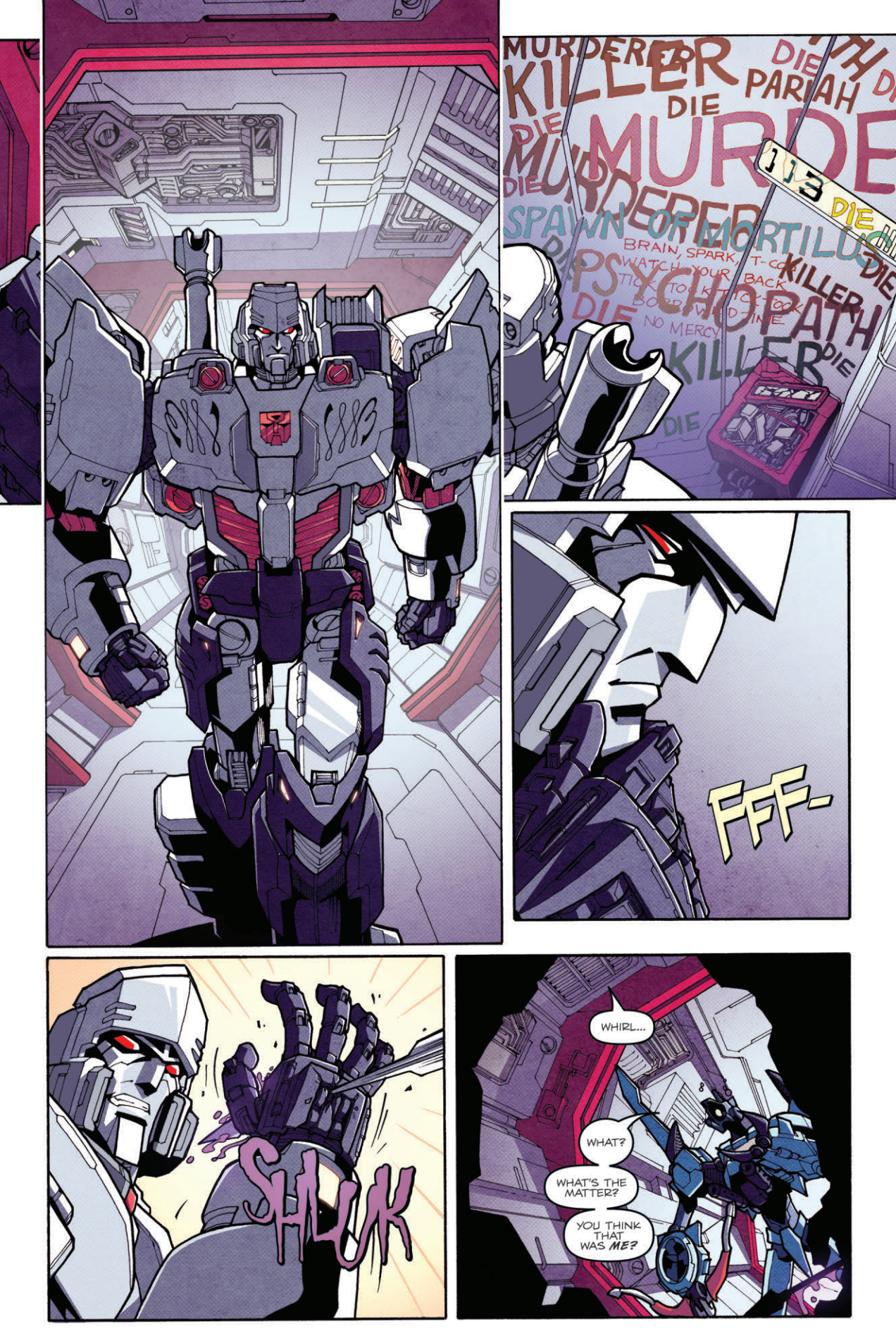
"—BUT ALL HE DOES IS SIT IN THE DARK AND PLAY HIS LAST MESSAGE OVER AND OVER."
YOUR ATTENTION FOR A MOMENT. THIS IS REWIND, SHOWING YOU EDITED FOOTAGE FROM MY DATABASE. I'VE PROBABLY GOT ABOUT 0.8 SECONDS BEFORE GAME OVER, SO HEAR ME OUT.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TERRIFIED THAT YOU'D DIE BEFORE I DID. BECAUSE YOU AND ME APART STRIKES ME AS INTENSELY WRONG.

CHROMEDOME? CAN WE COME IN? IT'S SKIDS AND NIGHTBEAT.
I THOUGHT THIS WAS HAB SUITE 208? WHERE'S THE EIGHT?
20

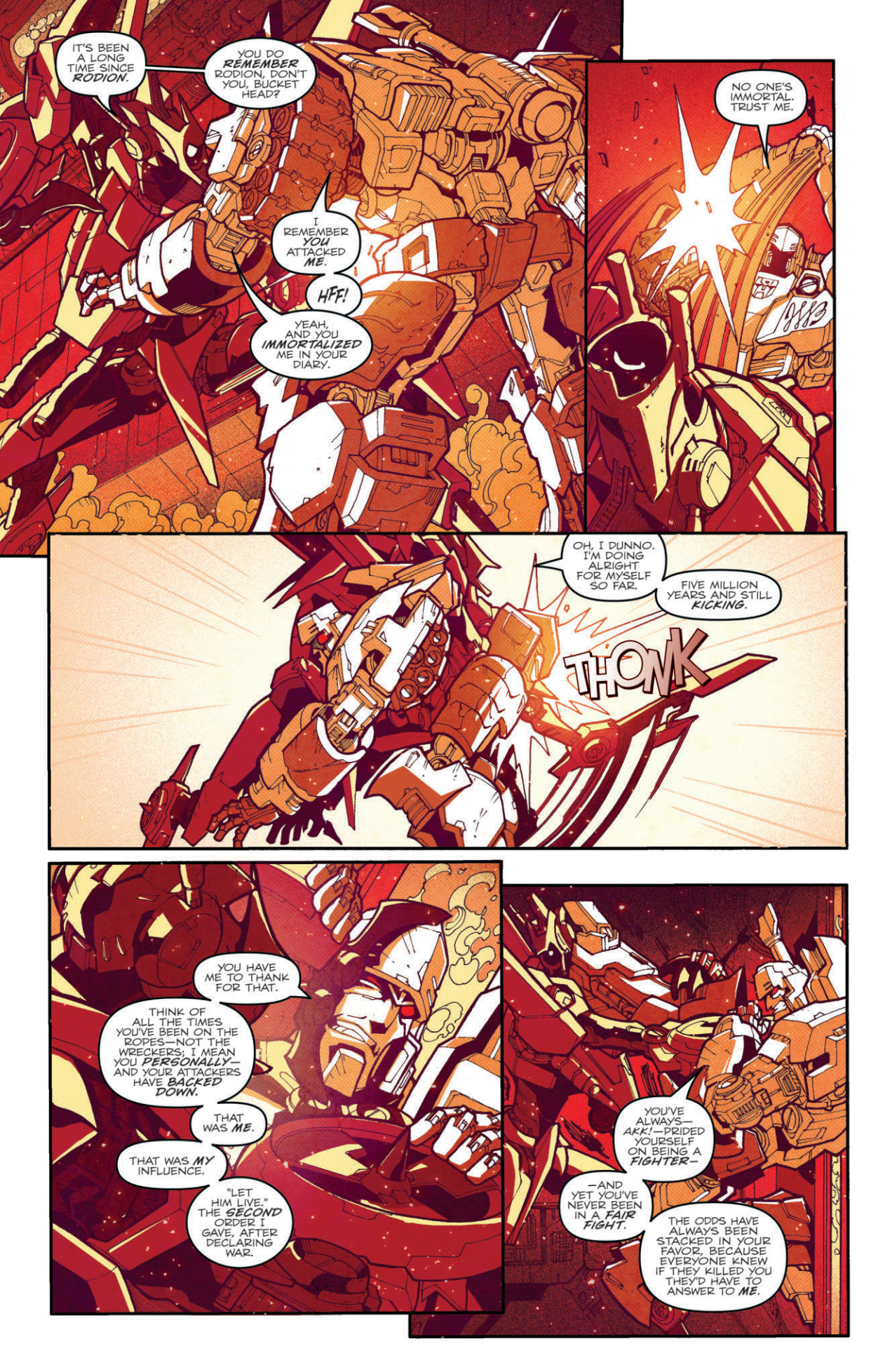

AND TO THINK I'LL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN.
ONE MORE THING—ONE LAST THING—BECAUSE I DON'T SAY IT ENOUGH: I LOVE YOU.
CHU-CHUK
YOUR ATTENTION FOR A MOMENT.
THIS IS REWIND, SHOWING YOU EDITED FOOTAGE FROM MY DATABASE. I'VE PROBABLY GOT 0.8 SECONDS BEFORE—

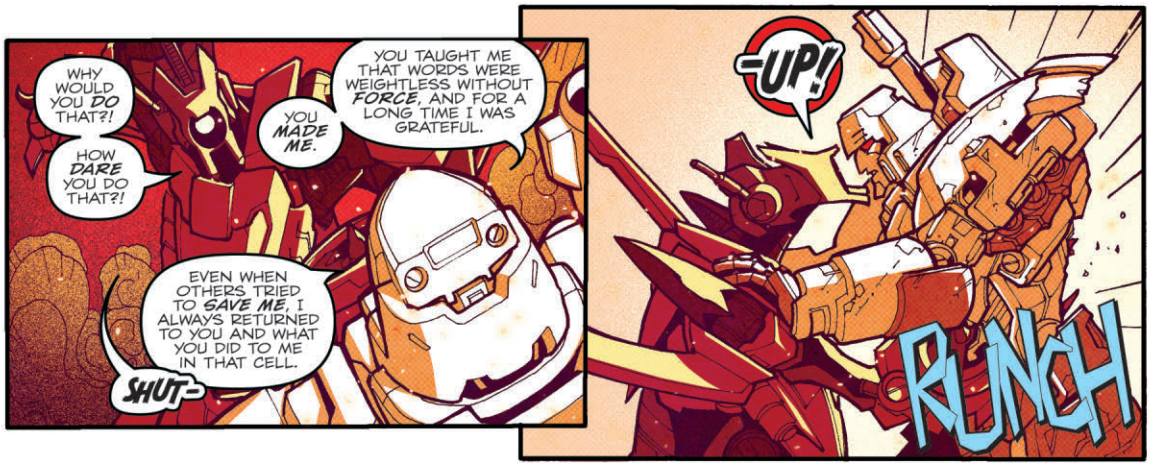
OUR FRIEND HAS BEEN WIDOWED AND YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT A MISSING NUMBER...?
NOT WORRIED. INTRIGUED.
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT.
20
AH, BUT THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT IMPORTANT.

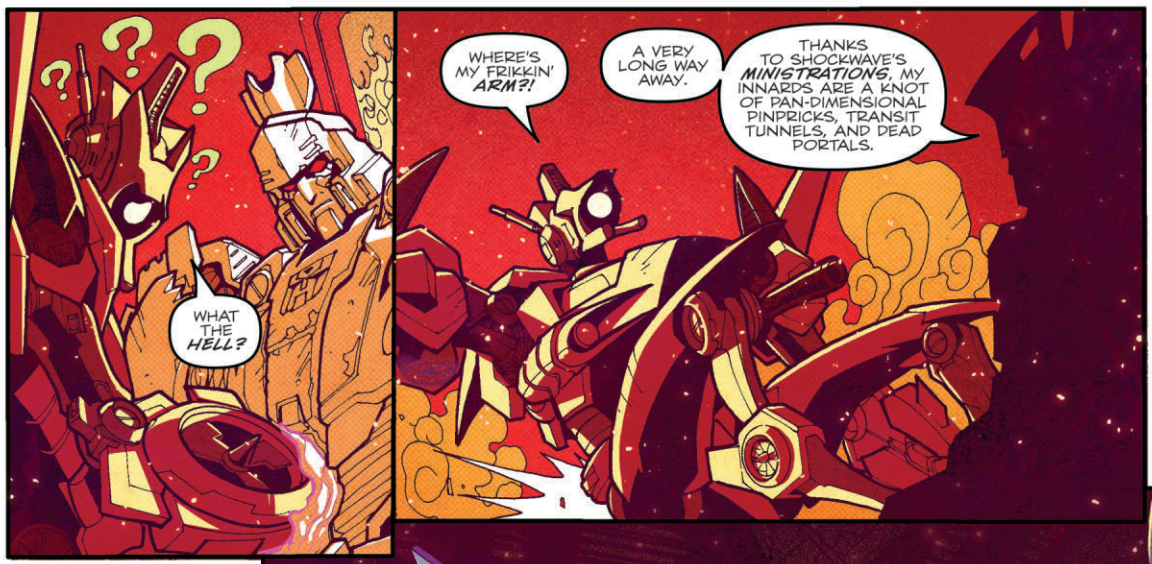
C'MON, SKIDS. LET'S LEAVE HIM BE.
HE'S DEALING WITH IT.
HE'S CLEARLY NOT.
FU LF R ACE
IN HIS OWN WAY, HE'S DEALING WITH IT.


KILLER
DIE
PARIAH
MURDERER
SPAWN OF MORTILUS
PSYCHOPATH
KILLER
BRAIN, SPARK, T-CON
WATCH YOUR BACK
NO MERCY
113
FFF-
SHLUK
WHIRL...
WHAT?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
YOU THINK THAT WAS ME?

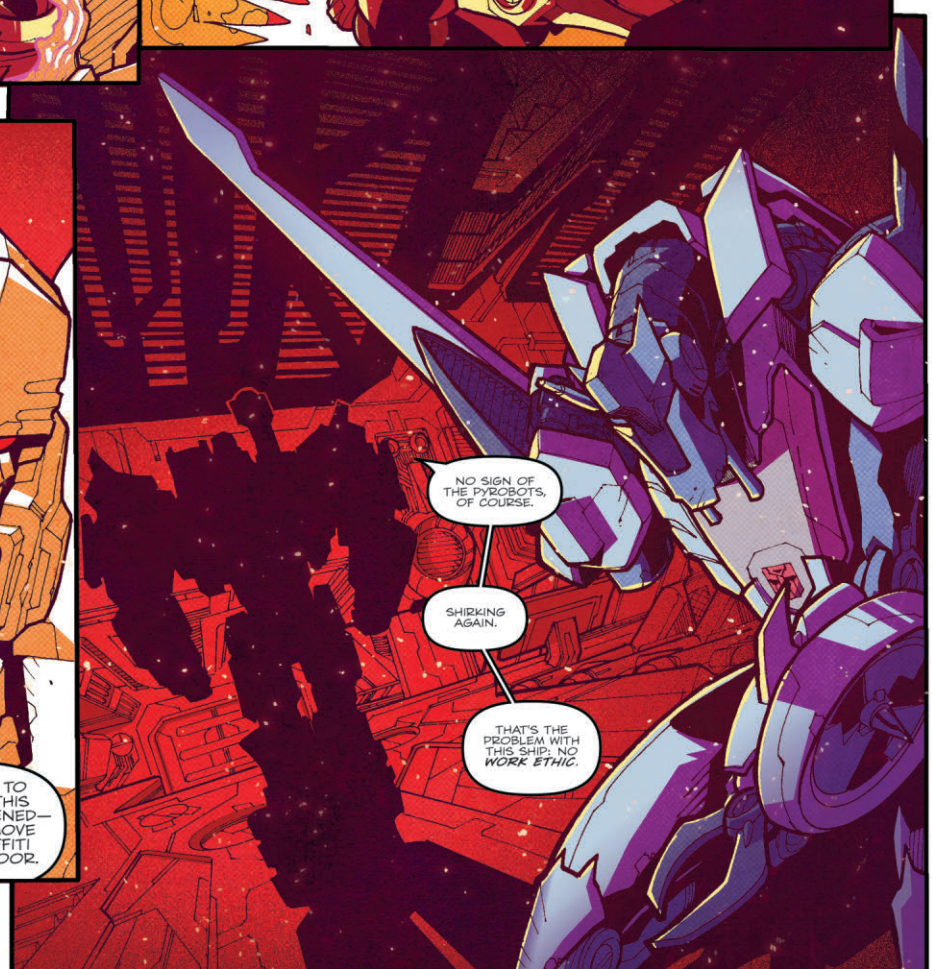
PROVE IT.
HKK!
FUEL FURNACE
OH, DON'T LOOK SO SURPRISED.
OLD SCORES AND ALL THAT.
WE BOTH KNOW THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER.
I GOT BORED OF WAITING FOR YOU TO MAKE YOUR MOVE—
—SO I FIGURED I'D GO FIRST!
KUNK


IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE RODION.
YOU DO REMEMBER RODION, DON'T YOU, BUCKET HEAD?
I REMEMBER YOU ATTACKED ME.
HFF!
YEAH, AND YOU IMMORTALIZED ME IN YOUR DIARY.
NO ONE'S IMMORTAL. TRUST ME.
OH, I DUNNO. I'M DOING ALRIGHT FOR MYSELF SO FAR.
FIVE MILLION YEARS AND STILL KICKING.
THONK
YOU HAVE ME TO THANK FOR THAT.
THINK OF ALL THE TIMES YOU'VE BEEN ON THE ROPES—NOT THE WRECKERS; I MEAN YOU PERSONALLY—AND YOUR ATTACKERS HAVE BACKED DOWN.
THAT WAS ME.
THAT WAS MY INFLUENCE.
"LET HIM LIVE." THE SECOND ORDER I GAVE, AFTER DECLARING WAR.
YOU'VE ALWAYS—AKK!—PRIDED YOURSELF ON BEING A FIGHTER—
—AND YET YOU'VE NEVER BEEN IN A FAIR FIGHT.
THE ODDS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN STACKED IN YOUR FAVOR, BECAUSE EVERYONE KNEW IF THEY KILLED YOU THEY'D HAVE TO ANSWER TO ME.


WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?!
HOW DARE YOU DO THAT?!
YOU MADE ME.
YOU TAUGHT ME THAT WORDS WERE WEIGHTLESS WITHOUT FORCE, AND FOR A LONG TIME I WAS GRATEFUL.
EVEN WHEN OTHERS TRIED TO SAVE ME, I ALWAYS RETURNED TO YOU AND WHAT YOU DID TO ME IN THAT CELL.
SHUT-
-UP!
RUNCH


WHAT THE HELL?
WHERE'S MY FRIKKIN' ARM?!
A VERY LONG WAY AWAY.
THANKS TO SHOCKWAVE'S MINISTRATIONS, MY INNARDS ARE A KNOT OF PAN-DIMENSIONAL PINPRICKS, TRANSIT TUNNELS, AND DEAD PORTALS.

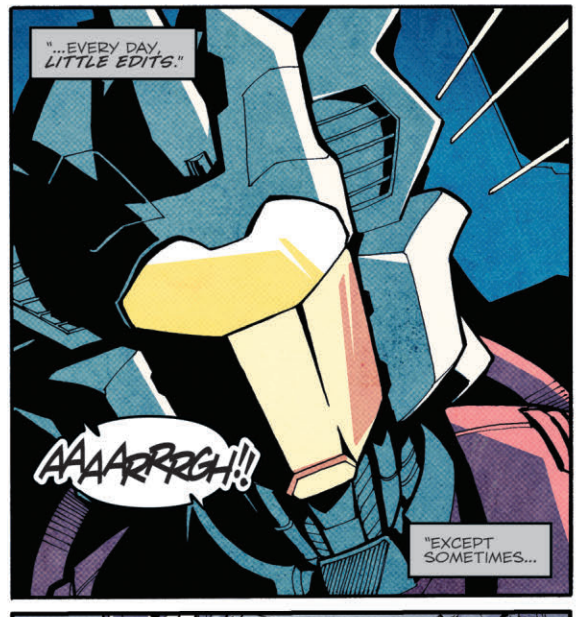
I'M HAPPY TO PRETEND THIS NEVER HAPPENED— IF YOU REMOVE THAT GRAFFITI FROM MY DOOR.

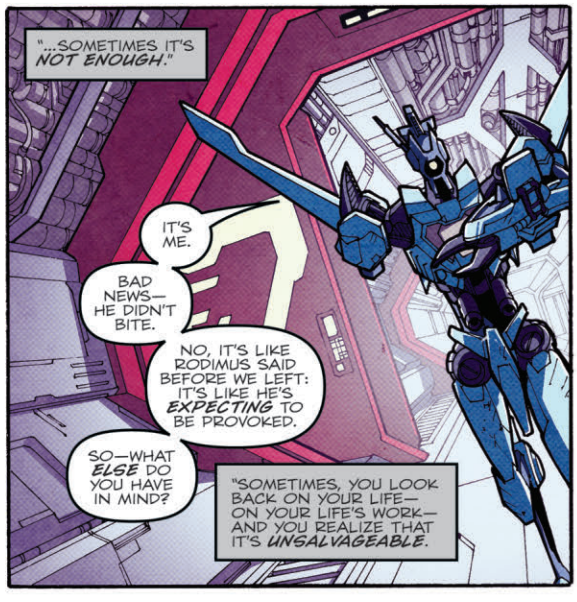

NO SIGN OF THE PYROBOTS, OF COURSE.
SHIRKING AGAIN.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THIS SHIP: NO WORK ETHIC.

"MEGATRON—WAIT."

WHY DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME?
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
PEOPLE NEVER STOP CHANGING, RUNG.
WE'RE ALL OF US WORKS IN PROGRESS.
WE'RE THE SUM OF OUR EXPERIENCES...

"...EVEN IF WE EDIT THOSE EXPERIENCES TO SUIT.
"SELECTIVE MEMORY, DENIAL, POST-JUSTIFICATION... WE RE-WRITE HISTORY—OUR OWN HISTORY—TO KEEP US SANE. TO STOP US GIVING UP. EVERY DAY, WE DO IT..."
AND TO THINK I'LL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN.
ONE MORE THING—ONE LAST THING—BECAUSE I DON'T SAY IT ENOUGH:


"...EVERY DAY, LITTLE EDITS."
AAAARRRGH!!
"EXCEPT SOMETIMES...

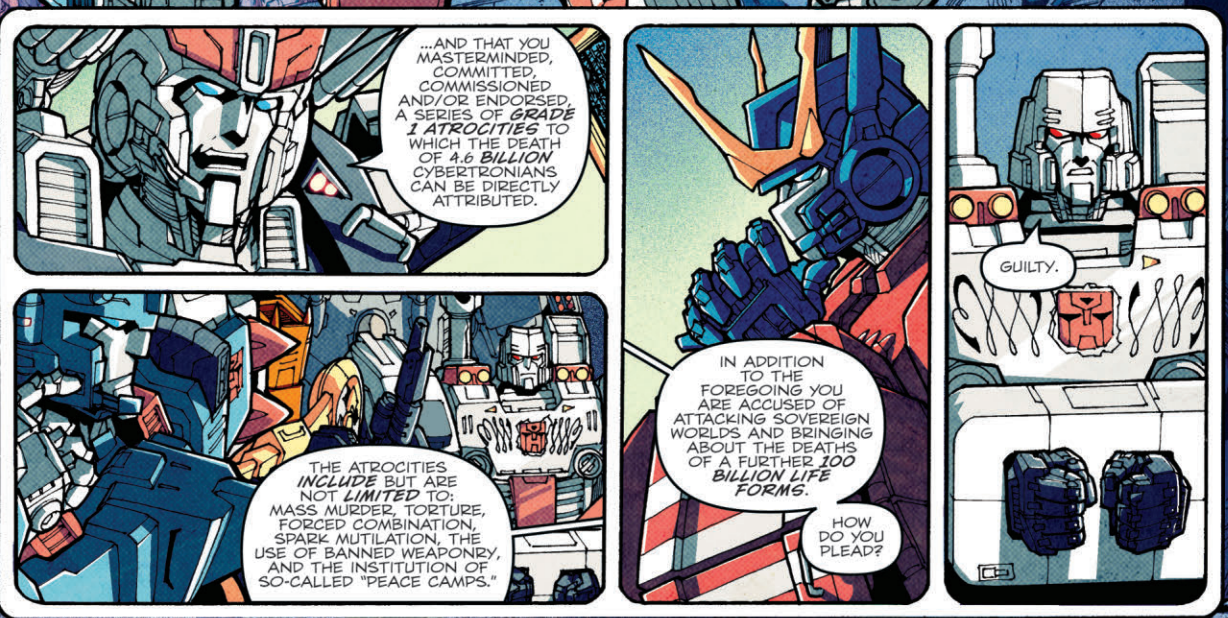

"...SOMETIMES IT'S NOT ENOUGH."
IT'S ME.
BAD NEWS—HE DIDN'T BITE.
NO, IT'S LIKE RODIMUS SAID BEFORE WE LEFT: IT'S LIKE HE'S EXPECTING TO BE PROVOKED.
SO—WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?
"SOMETIMES, YOU LOOK BACK ON YOUR LIFE—ON YOUR LIFE'S WORK—AND YOU REALIZE THAT IT'S UNSALVAGEABLE.

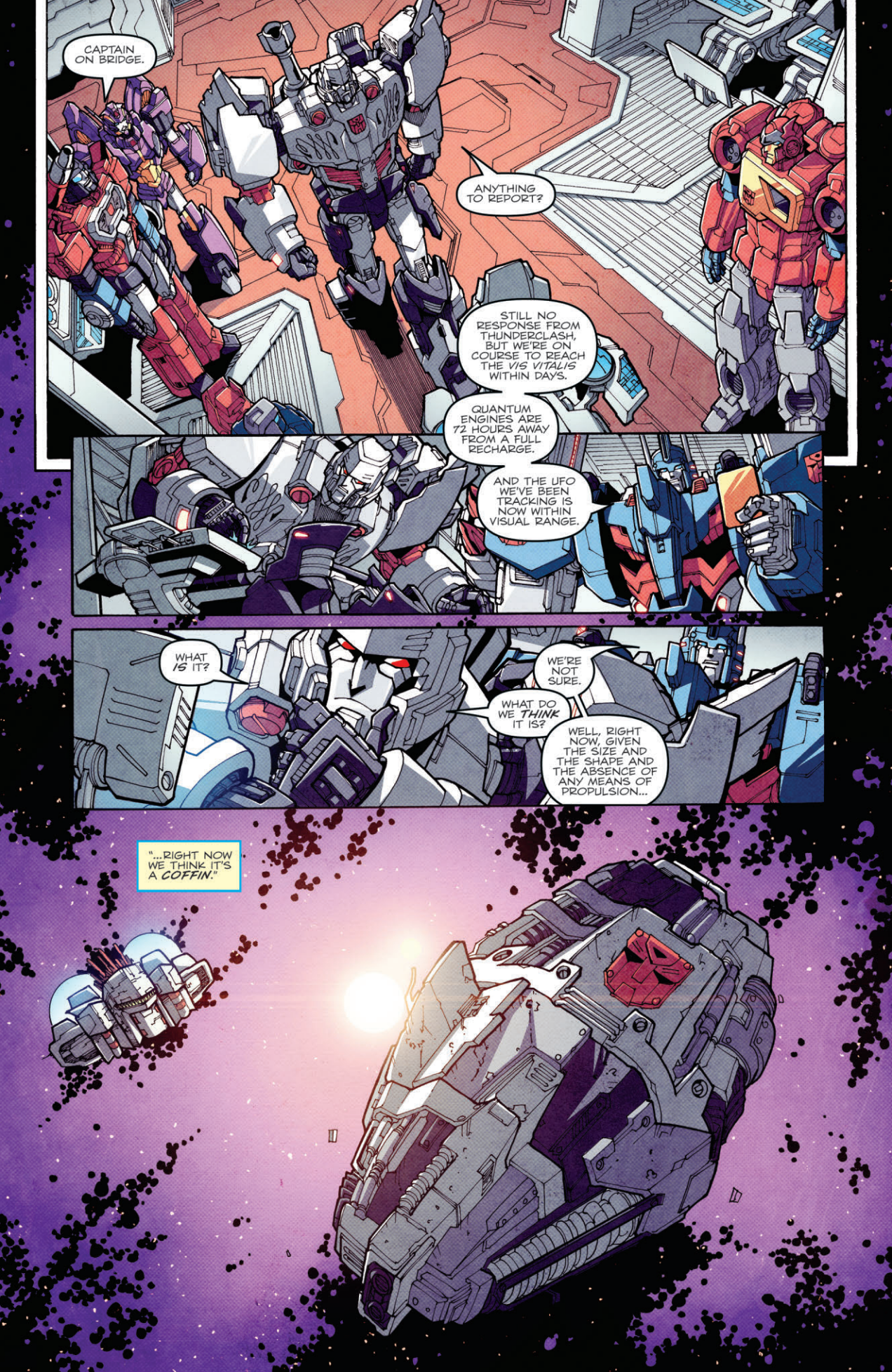
"AND IF YOU'RE BRAVE ENOUGH—OR DESPERATE ENOUGH—YOU THROW IT ALL AWAY AND START AGAIN.
"ON LUNA 2, I THREW IT ALL AWAY. AND HERE, WITH THE HELP OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU, I'M STARTING AGAIN.
"A BRAND NEW AUTOBIOGRAPHY. SAME TITLE, DIFFERENT WORDS."

LUNA 2, SIX MONTHS AGO.
"MEGATRON OF TARN...
"YOU STAND ACCUSED OF *CRIMES AGAINST THE SPECIES*, SUCH A TERM BEING USED IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS TRIAL TO REPRESENT A *RANGE OF OFFENCES*.
"THE PRINCIPAL ACCUSATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS: THAT YOU, MEGATRON—

"—FOUNDED A ***TERRORIST ARMY*** AND ACTED IN PURSUIT OF GOALS THAT WERE ***ANTITHETICAL TO PEACE***, SUCH AS REPLACING THE ***SENATE*** AND ITS SUCCESSOR, THE ***STRATOCRACY***, WITH AN ***AUTOCRATIC RÉGIME*** CENTERED AROUND ***YOU***.

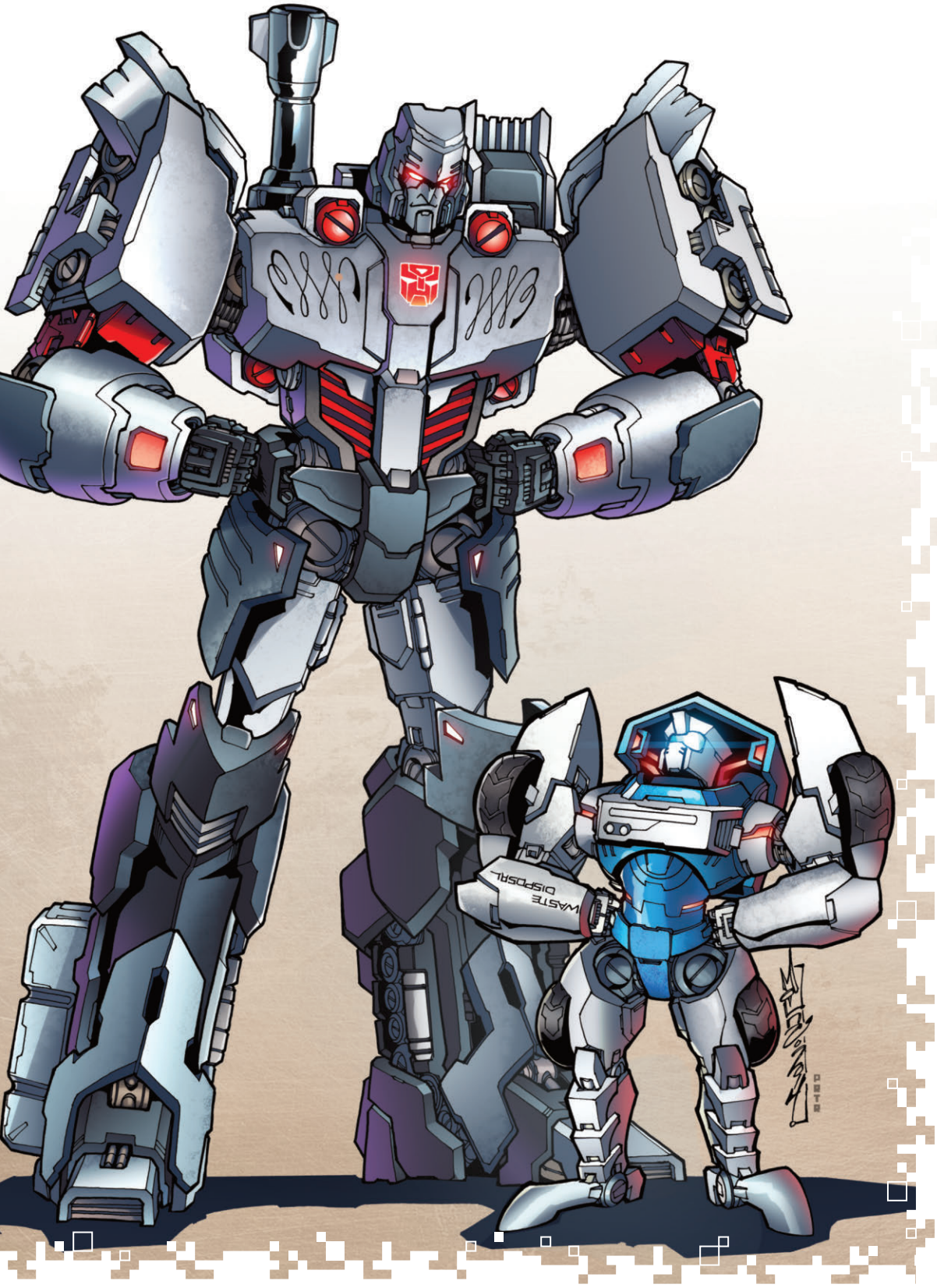
"THAT YOU ORCHESTRATED A PROLONGED CAMPAIGN OF ***TERRITORIAL AGGRANDIZEMENT*** INTENDED TO CULMINATE WITH THE OCCUPATION OF CYBERTRON AND ITS SECOND MOON...




CAPTAIN ON BRIDGE.
ANYTHING TO REPORT?
STILL NO RESPONSE FROM THUNDERCLASH, BUT WE'RE ON COURSE TO REACH THE *VIS VITALIS* WITHIN DAYS.
QUANTUM ENGINES ARE 72 HOURS AWAY FROM A FULL RECHARGE.
AND THE UFO WE'VE BEEN TRACKING IS NOW WITHIN VISUAL RANGE.
WHAT *IS* IT?
WE'RE NOT SURE.
WHAT DO WE *THINK* IT IS?
WELL, RIGHT NOW, GIVEN THE SIZE AND THE SHAPE AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY MEANS OF PROPULSION...
"...RIGHT NOW WE THINK IT'S A *COFFIN*."

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #28 COVER RI

by **ALEX MILNE** Colors by **JOSH PEREZ**



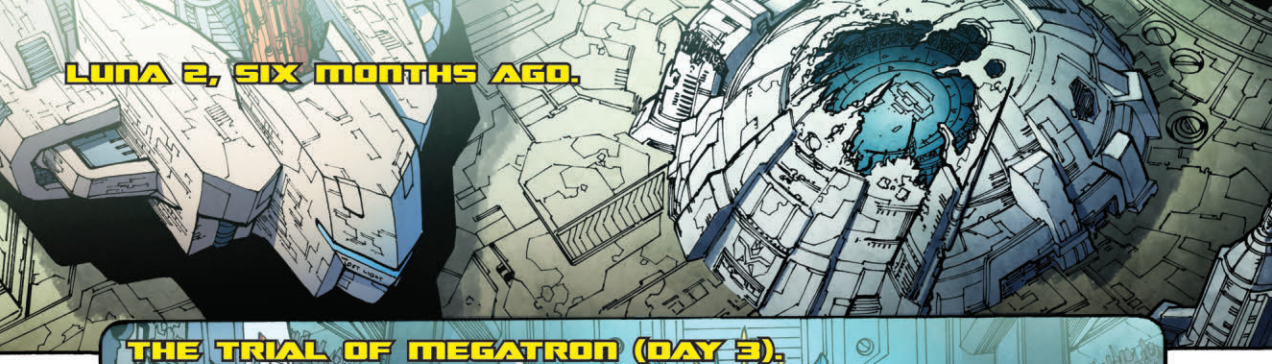
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #29 COVER A

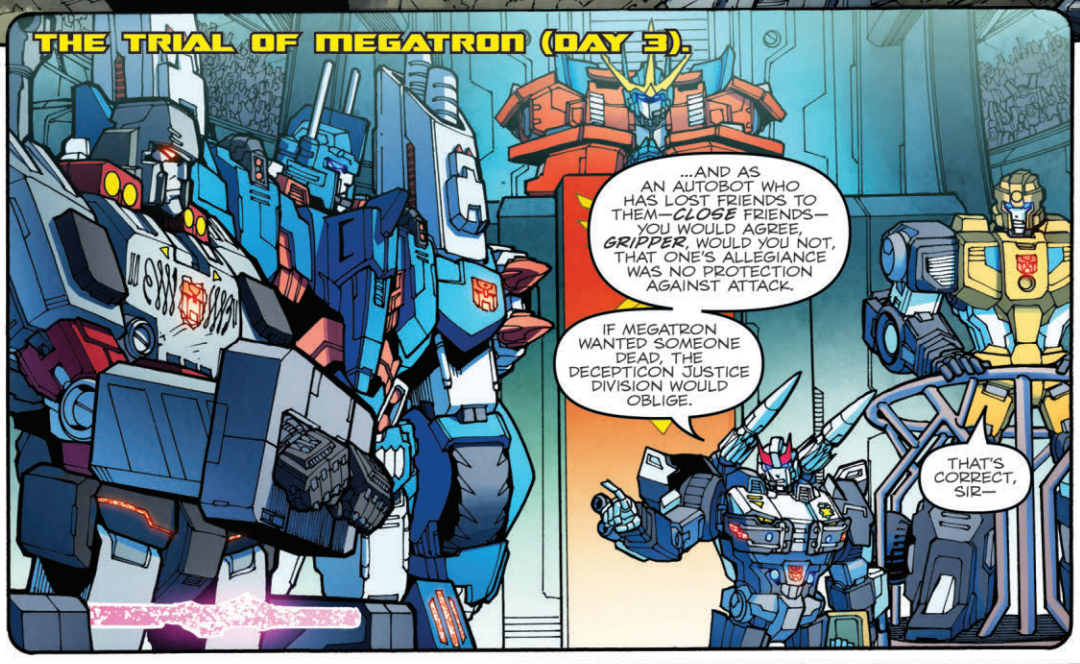
by **ALEX MILNE** Colors by **PRISCILLA TRAMONTANO**

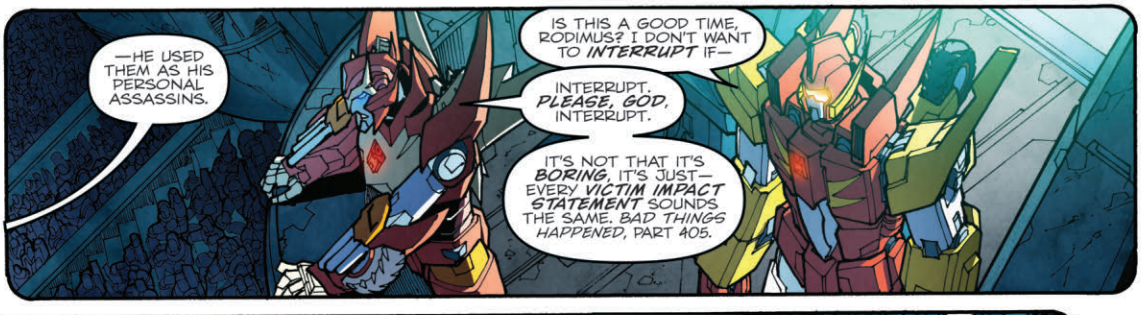
THE LOST LIGHT.
VRRRRRRRM
HAB SUITE 14.
VRRRRRRRM
TSCHE-CH-CH-CH-TSCHE
FINGER-IN-THE-HEAD!
FINGER-IN-THE-HEAD!
WHAT ARE YOU—? TAILGATE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I CALL IT MY SIGNATURE MOVE!

'KAY, CYCLONUS, SO APART FROM A VOTE ON RODIMUS'S CAPTAINCY, THE RETURN OF ROOF-JUMPING, NAME-TAKING OPTIMUS PRIME, A TITAN SMACKDOWN, AND THE NEAR-COLLAPSE OF BOTH TIME AND SPACE—
APART FROM THAT, I DIDN'T ACTUALLY MISS MUCH AT ALL.
HMM.
THIS WAY! KEEP UP—AND KEEP IT HORIZONTAL!
CALL YOURSELF PALLBEARERS?
WAS THAT—?
YES.
NO! BUT DIDN'T HE—?
HE CERTAINLY DID.
OH MY GOODNESS.
BUT HE WAS WEARING ONE OF THESE!
YES, AND IT DOESN'T SUIT EITHER OF YOU.
YOU DON'T LIKE IT?
I WOKE UP IN THE MEDIBAY AND THERE IT WAS—LIKE A LITTLE "WELL DONE" PRESENT.
"WELL DONE FOR NOT DYING!"
HEY HEY HEY! LOOK WHO'S OFF HIS TINY SICK BED!

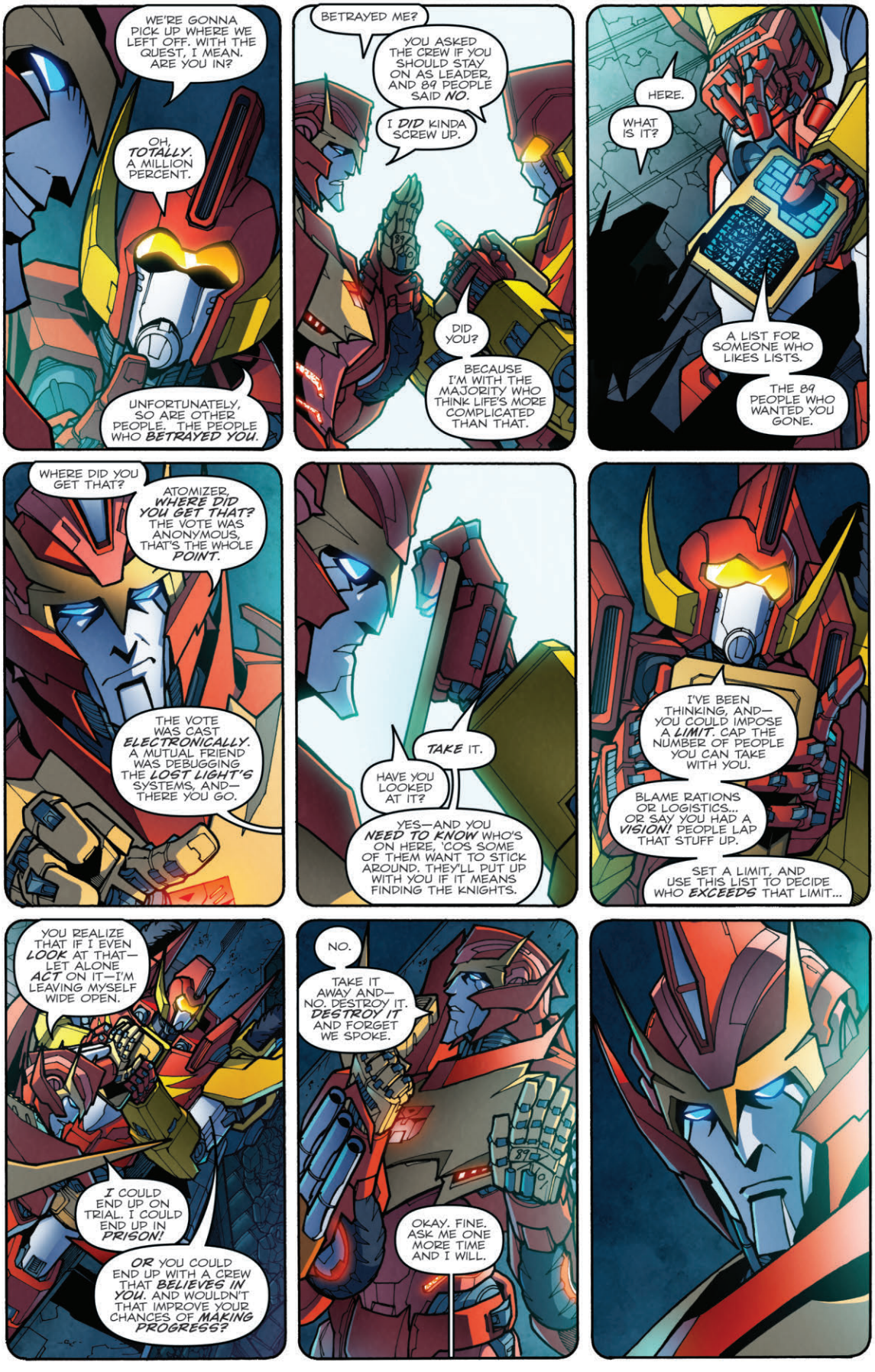
IT'S DAINTY LEGS!
PANIC BUTTON!
THE PLUCKIEST WASTE DISPOSAL EXPERT WHO EVER JUST-ABOUT-LIVED!
SERIOUSLY, TAILGATE: IF BRAVE WAS A COLOR, YOU'D BE THAT COLOR. IF IT WAS A SOUND—
SHHH! LET ME FINISH!
IF BRAVE WAS A SOUND, YOU'D MAKE THAT SOUND ALL THE TIME.
ON BEHALF OF JACKPOT'S REPUTATION, I APOLOGIZE.
I'M A LONE-LY CY-BER-TRO-NIAN!
HAS HE BEEN DRINKING?
WORSE. HE'S BEEN DRINKING WITH TRAILCUTTER.
WE'RE OFF TO SEE IF RATCHET CAN PERFORM C.P.R. ON HIS F.I.M. CHIP.*
*FUEL INTAKE MODERATION CHIP
OKAY, SO HE WAS ABSOLUTELY STAR SABERED, BUT HE REALLY WAS PLEASED TO SEE ME! AS IN GENUINELY!
CLEARLY YOU'VE BEEN MISSED.
HAVE I?
HAVE I, THOUGH?
VERY MUCH.
I TELL YOU, IF I EVER COMPILED A TOP TEN OF BEST EVER DAYS, TODAY WOULD BE... POW! IN AT NUMBER ONE, Y'KNOW?
GETTING THE ALL CLEAR FROM RATCHET, GETTING MY BADGE, PEOPLE KNOWING WHO I AM—PEOPLE BEING NICE TO ME...
...I DON'T THINK LIFE CAN GET ANY—
—BETTER.
TEN...
WORLD, SHUT YOUR MOUTH
PART 2: WORDS HANG IN THE AIR


LUNA 2, SIX MONTHS AGO.


THE TRIAL OF MEGATRON (DAY 3).
...AND AS AN AUTOBOT WHO HAS LOST FRIENDS TO THEM—CLOSE FRIENDS—YOU WOULD AGREE, GRIPPER, WOULD YOU NOT, THAT ONE'S ALLEGIANCE WAS NO PROTECTION AGAINST ATTACK.
IF MEGATRON WANTED SOMEONE DEAD, THE DECEPTICON JUSTICE DIVISION WOULD OBLIGE.
THAT'S CORRECT, SIR—


—HE USED THEM AS HIS PERSONAL ASSASSINS.
IS THIS A GOOD TIME, RODIMUS? I DON'T WANT TO INTERRUPT IF—
INTERRUPT. PLEASE, GOD, INTERRUPT.
IT'S NOT THAT IT'S BORING, IT'S JUST—EVERY VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT SOUNDS THE SAME. BAD THINGS HAPPENED, PART 405.

AT LEAST WE HAD SOME VISUALS...
THE D.J.D. CLIP SHOW?
THAT VOS, THOUGH. THE SIZE OF HIM!
AND THE HOOKS...!
HOOKS FOR HIS HANDS AND HIS FEET! HOW DOES THAT EVEN WORK?
D'YOU EVER MAKE LISTS, ATOMIZER?
LISTS?
LIKE THE D.J.D.
THINGS YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH. THINGS YOU CAN TICK OFF.
IT'S NOT A TRICK QUESTION, I WAS JUST... REFLECTING ON MY PROGRESS TO DATE.


WE'RE GONNA PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF. WITH THE QUEST, I MEAN. ARE YOU IN?
OH, TOTALLY. A MILLION PERCENT.
UNFORTUNATELY, SO ARE OTHER PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE WHO BETRAYED YOU.
BETRAYED ME?
YOU ASKED THE CREW IF YOU SHOULD STAY ON AS LEADER, AND 89 PEOPLE SAID NO.
I DID KINDA SCREW UP.
DID YOU?
BECAUSE I'M WITH THE MAJORITY WHO THINK LIFE'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT.
HERE.
WHAT IS IT?
A LIST FOR SOMEONE WHO LIKES LISTS.
THE 89 PEOPLE WHO WANTED YOU GONE.
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?
ATOMIZER, WHERE DID YOU GET THAT? THE VOTE WAS ANONYMOUS, THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT.
THE VOTE WAS CAST ELECTRONICALLY. A MUTUAL FRIEND WAS DEBUGGING THE LOST LIGHT'S SYSTEMS, AND—THERE YOU GO.
TAKE IT.
HAVE YOU LOOKED AT IT?
YES—AND YOU NEED TO KNOW WHO'S ON HERE, 'COS SOME OF THEM WANT TO STICK AROUND. THEY'LL PUT UP WITH YOU IF IT MEANS FINDING THE KNIGHTS.
I'VE BEEN THINKING, AND—YOU COULD IMPOSE A LIMIT. CAP THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE YOU CAN TAKE WITH YOU.
BLAME RATIONS OR LOGISTICS... OR SAY YOU HAD A VISION! PEOPLE LAP THAT STUFF UP.
SET A LIMIT, AND USE THIS LIST TO DECIDE WHO EXCEEDS THAT LIMIT...
YOU REALIZE THAT IF I EVEN LOOK AT THAT—LET ALONE ACT ON IT—I'M LEAVING MYSELF WIDE OPEN.
I COULD END UP ON TRIAL. I COULD END UP IN PRISON!
OR YOU COULD END UP WITH A CREW THAT BELIEVES IN YOU. AND WOULDN'T THAT IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF MAKING PROGRESS?
NO.
TAKE IT AWAY AND—NO. DESTROY IT. DESTROY IT AND FORGET WE SPOKE.
OKAY. FINE. ASK ME ONE MORE TIME AND I WILL.

SWERVE'S, TODAY.

TEN.

WHERE'D YOU FIND HIM?

YOU KIDDING? WE COULDN'T *MOVE* FOR LEGISLATORS AFTER YOU TURNED ALL OF 'EM INTO STATUES WITH YOUR *MIND VOODOO.**

TEN HAD A *BRUISED BRAIN*—EASY TO HACK—AND I'VE ALWAYS WANTED A *DOORMAN*, SO...

*ISSUE #21

TEN?

HE'S CALLED *TEN?*

YEAH, IT'S HIS FAVORITE WORD.

FAVORITE WORD/ONLY WORD.

HE WOULDN'T LET US IN UNTIL CYCLONUS HAD SURRENDERED HIS *GREAT SWORD*...

THAT'S BECAUSE HE'S BEEN PROGRAMMED TO OBEY *THE THREE LAWS.*

NO GUNS
NO SWORDS
NO BRIEFCASES

IF HE'S CALLED TEN, WHY'S HE GOT "9" ON HIS BACK?

BECAUSE IT'S FUNNY.

IS IT?

IT IS IF YOU'VE GOT A SENSE OF HUMOR.

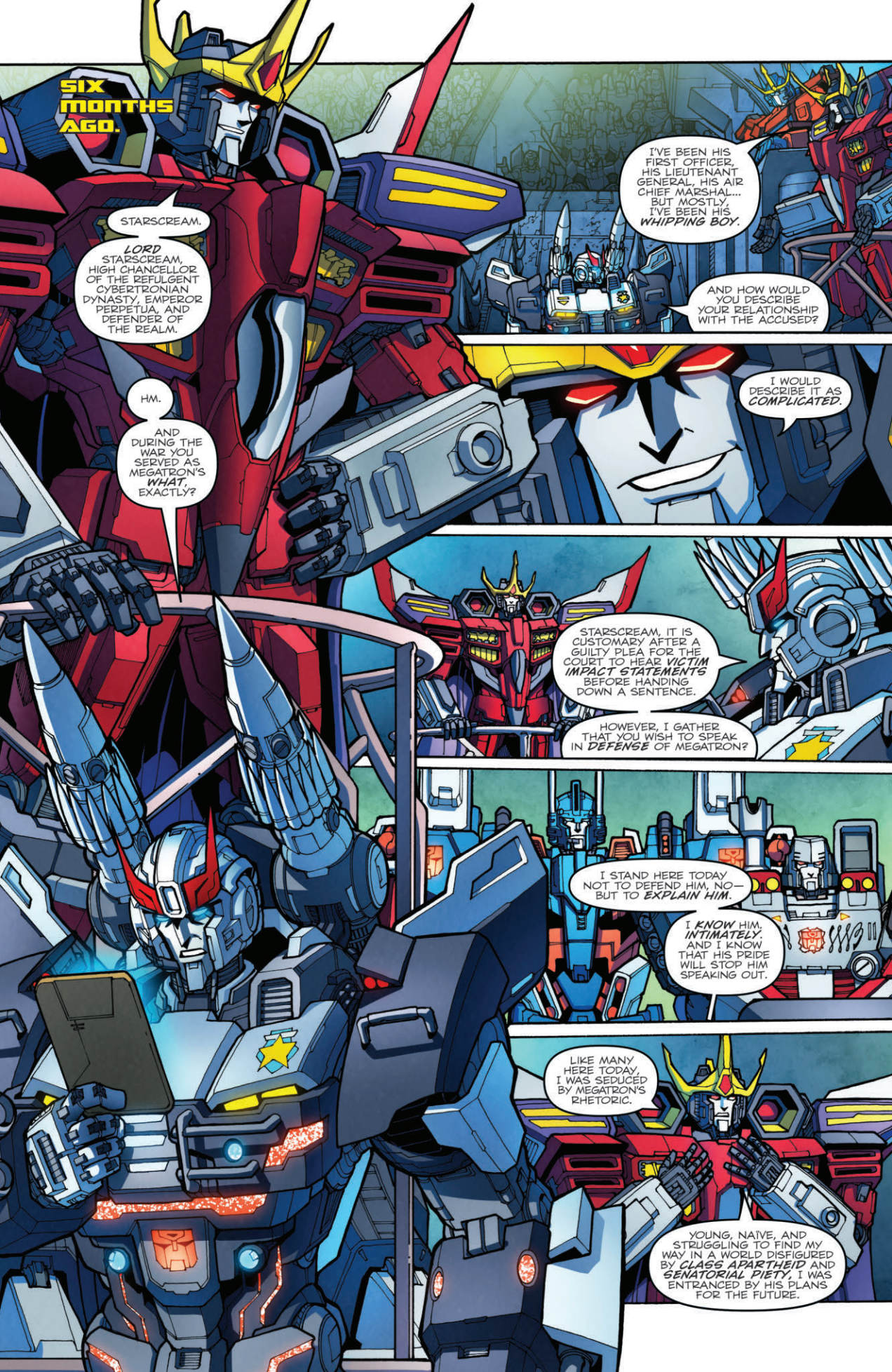
YOU MUST'VE LOST YOURS TO *CYBERCROSIS.*

WHO HIT *YOU* WITH THE GRUMPY STICK?

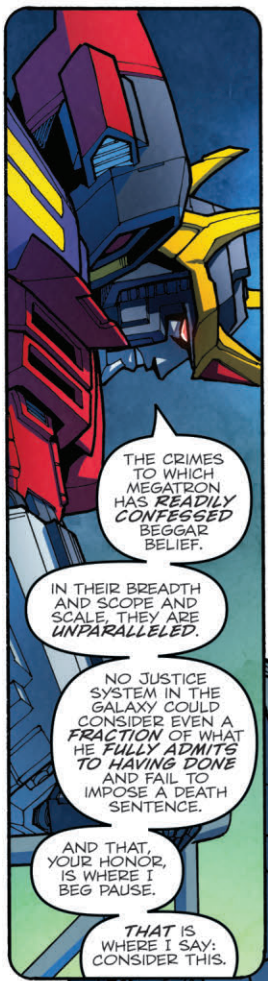
(A) MY OLD INJURY'S PLAYING UP, (B) SOME *PRANKSTER* THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FUNNY TO STEAL ONE OF THE *ENGEX VATS*—

—AND (C), WHICH SHOULD REALLY HAVE BEEN (A)...

"...WE'VE SOMEHOW ENDED UP WITH A CAPTAIN WHO'S KILLED MORE PEOPLE THAN HAVE EVER LIVED."
"TENSIONS RAN HIGH EARLIER TODAY, AS A SNARLING MEGATRON CAME CLOSE TO ATTACKING AUTOBOT HERO ULTRA MAGNUS.
"THE PAIR NEARLY CAME TO BLOWS AFTER THE ONE-TIME LAW ENFORCER OBJECTED TO THE SLAG MAKER'S RASH DECISION TO BRING AN UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT ON BOARD.
"MORE NEWS AS IT COMES IN."
ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER AWESOME EDITION OF THE LOST LIGHT INSIDER.
IT'S A SCANDAL SHEET, RIPTIDE.
IT USES GOSSIP, MOCKERY, AND SLANDER TO TITILLATE ITS READERS, AND WHOEVER WRITES IT SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF THEMSELVES.
AND "MAGS V. MEGS" WOULD'VE MADE A MUCH BETTER HEADLINE.
BOOOOOOR-RING!
THIS IS EVERYONE:
"CHAT CHAT BORING BORING CHAT CHAT BORING."
WHAT'S UP WITH TRAILCUTTER?
SAME AS IT EVER WAS—
—LOW SELF-ESTEEM, CRIPPLING STATUS ANXIETY, AND THE REALIZATION THAT, WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, THERE'S ONLY SO LONG YOU CAN PLASTER A SMILE OVER A BROKEN SOUL.
TIME I WAS OFF! JUST ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD...
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE FIT TO DRIVE.
JUST ONE MORE. MAKE IT A BRAWN.*
*A VERY SHORT, VERY STRONG DRINK.
COURSE, YOU KNOW WHERE YOU CAN FIND THE STRONGEST FUEL OF ALL...
...THE MEDIBAY.
ACCORDING TO THE INSIDER, THAT'S WHERE MEGATRON KEEPS HIS SUPERFUEL.
IT'S SO POWERFUL IT MAKES THE GLASS TWITCH.
SKIDS! NAUTICA! THINGY!
YOU HAVE FIVE SECONDS TO TALK ME OUT OF DOING SOMETHING SPECTACULAR.
"NAME?"


SIX MONTHS AGO.
STARSCREAM.
LORD STARSCREAM, HIGH CHANCELLOR OF THE REFULGENT CYBERTRONIAN DYNASTY, EMPEROR PERPETUA, AND DEFENDER OF THE REALM.
HM.
AND DURING THE WAR YOU SERVED AS MEGATRON'S WHAT, EXACTLY?
I'VE BEEN HIS FIRST OFFICER, HIS LIEUTENANT GENERAL, HIS AIR CHIEF MARSHAL... BUT MOSTLY, I'VE BEEN HIS WHIPPING BOY.
AND HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ACCUSED?
I WOULD DESCRIBE IT AS COMPLICATED.
STARSCREAM, IT IS CUSTOMARY AFTER A GUILTY PLEA FOR THE COURT TO HEAR VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS BEFORE HANDING DOWN A SENTENCE.
HOWEVER, I GATHER THAT YOU WISH TO SPEAK IN DEFENSE OF MEGATRON?
I STAND HERE TODAY NOT TO DEFEND HIM, NO— BUT TO EXPLAIN HIM.
I KNOW HIM. INTIMATELY. AND I KNOW THAT HIS PRIDE WILL STOP HIM SPEAKING OUT.
LIKE MANY HERE TODAY, I WAS SEDUCED BY MEGATRON'S RHETORIC.
YOUNG, NAÏVE, AND STRUGGLING TO FIND MY WAY IN A WORLD DISFIGURED BY CLASS APARTHEID AND SENATORIAL PIETY, I WAS ENTRANCED BY HIS PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

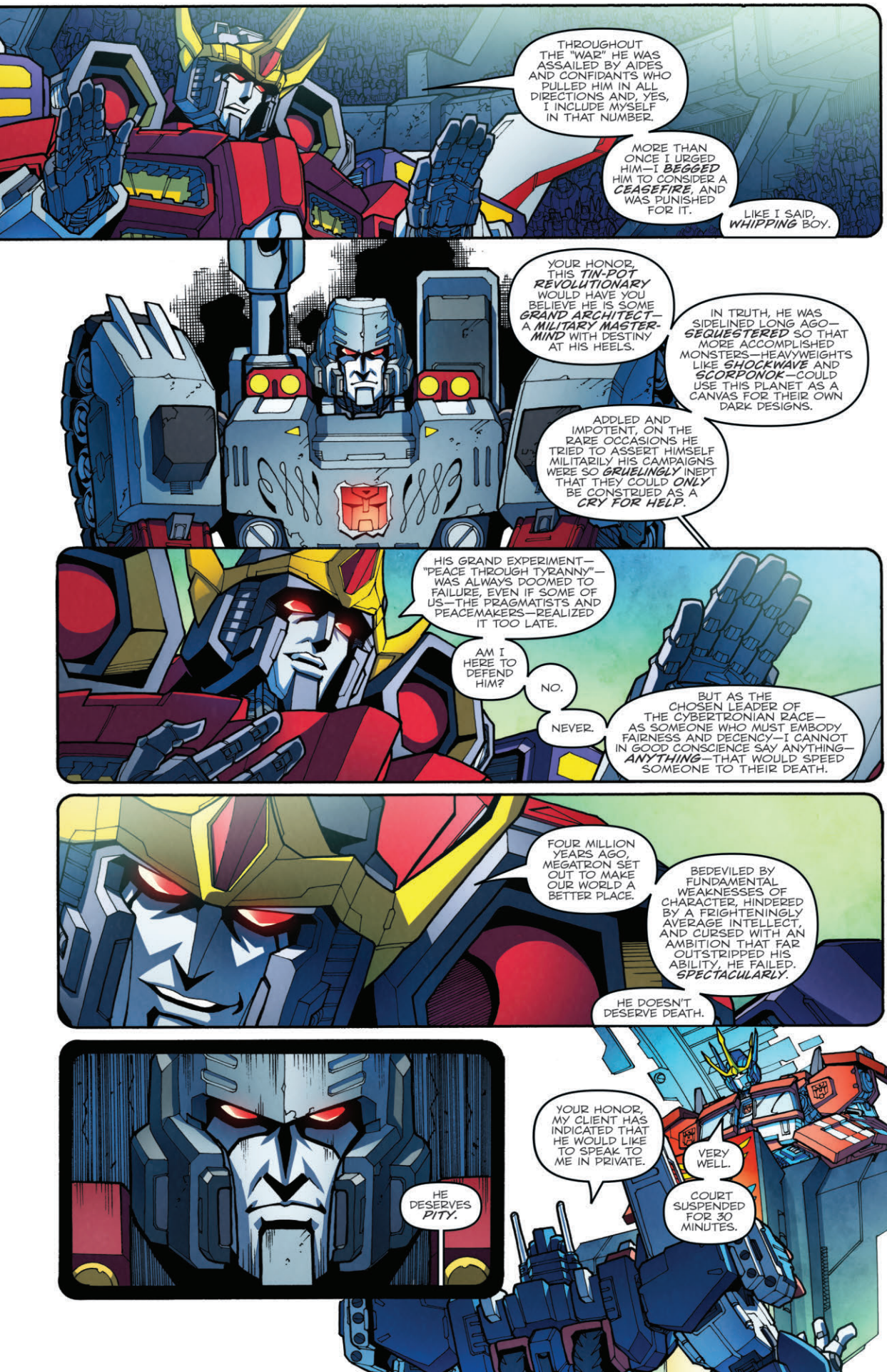
HE DESCRIBED A BETTER SOCIETY—AN OUTWARD-LOOKING SOCIETY. A SOCIETY UNAFRAID TO STARE DOWN THE ANTI-MECHANICAL PREJUDICE THAT WAS SWEEPING ACROSS THE GALAXY.
THEN, AS NOW, I WAS PROUD.
PROUD OF MY PLANET. PROUD OF ITS PEOPLE. I WAS DETERMINED TO—
OBJECTION.
WITNESS IS GRAND-STANDING.
SUSTAINED.
TODAY IS NOT ABOUT YOU, STARSCREAM.


THE CRIMES TO WHICH MEGATRON HAS READILY CONFESSED BEGGAR BELIEF.
IN THEIR BREADTH AND SCOPE AND SCALE, THEY ARE UNPARALLELED.
NO JUSTICE SYSTEM IN THE GALAXY COULD CONSIDER EVEN A FRACTION OF WHAT HE FULLY ADMITS TO HAVING DONE AND FAIL TO IMPOSE A DEATH SENTENCE.
AND THAT, YOUR HONOR, IS WHERE I BEG PAUSE.
THAT IS WHERE I SAY: CONSIDER THIS.

A LIFETIME AGO, MEGATRON SET IN MOTION SOMETHING HE COULD NEVER HOPE TO CONTROL.
HE TAPPED—ALMOST BY CHANCE—INTO A GROUNDSWELL OF—OF RAGE AND RESENTMENT.
AND HE WAS SINGULARLY UNPREPARED FOR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.

AND AS FOR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, WELL... WE ALL CALL IT A WAR BECAUSE TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD INSULT THE DEAD. BUT REALLY? REALLY, IT WAS A RIOT.
THE WAR WAS A RIOT AND MEGATRON WAS A LOOTER. CAUGHT UP IN EVENTS, YES, BUT NOT SHAPING THEM. NOT COORDINATING THEM.
A STRONGER PERSON—A BRAVER PERSON—SOMEONE WITH AN OUNCE OF STRATEGIC ACUMEN—WOULD HAVE PREVENTED THE REVOLUTION FROM DESCENDING INTO CHAOS.

BUT NO.
TO THE LASTING REGRET OF EVERY CYBERTRONIAN, ALIVE AND DEAD, MEGATRON IS NEITHER STRONG, NOR BRAVE, NOR BRILLIANT—NOR POSSESSED OF ANY PARTICULAR TALENT BEYOND SURVIVAL.


THROUGHOUT THE "WAR" HE WAS ASSAILED BY AIDES AND CONFIDANTS WHO PULLED HIM IN ALL DIRECTIONS AND, YES, I INCLUDE MYSELF IN THAT NUMBER.
MORE THAN ONCE I URGED HIM—I BEGGED HIM TO CONSIDER A CEASEFIRE, AND WAS PUNISHED FOR IT.
LIKE I SAID, WHIPPING BOY.
YOUR HONOR, THIS TIN-POT REVOLUTIONARY WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE HE IS SOME GRAND ARCHITECT—A MILITARY MASTERMIND WITH DESTINY AT HIS HEELS.
IN TRUTH, HE WAS SIDELINED LONG AGO—SEQUESTERED SO THAT MORE ACCOMPLISHED MONSTERS—HEAVYWEIGHTS LIKE SHOCKWAVE AND SCORPONOK—COULD USE THIS PLANET AS A CANVAS FOR THEIR OWN DARK DESIGNS.
ADDLED AND IMPOTENT, ON THE RARE OCCASIONS HE TRIED TO ASSERT HIMSELF MILITARILY HIS CAMPAIGNS WERE SO GRUELINGLY INEPT THAT THEY COULD ONLY BE CONSTRUED AS A CRY FOR HELP.
HIS GRAND EXPERIMENT—"PEACE THROUGH TYRANNY"—WAS ALWAYS DOOMED TO FAILURE, EVEN IF SOME OF US—THE PRAGMATISTS AND PEACEMAKERS—REALIZED IT TOO LATE.
AM I HERE TO DEFEND HIM?
NO.
NEVER.
BUT AS THE CHOSEN LEADER OF THE CYBERTRONIAN RACE—AS SOMEONE WHO MUST EMBODY FAIRNESS AND DECENCY—I CANNOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE SAY ANYTHING—ANYTHING—THAT WOULD SPEED SOMEONE TO THEIR DEATH.
FOUR MILLION YEARS AGO, MEGATRON SET OUT TO MAKE OUR WORLD A BETTER PLACE.
BEDEVILED BY FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESSES OF CHARACTER, HINDERED BY A FRIGHTENINGLY AVERAGE INTELLECT, AND CURSED WITH AN AMBITION THAT FAR OUTSTRIPPED HIS ABILITY, HE FAILED. SPECTACULARLY.
HE DOESN'T DESERVE DEATH.
HE DESERVES PITY.
YOUR HONOR, MY CLIENT HAS INDICATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO ME IN PRIVATE.
VERY WELL.
COURT SUSPENDED FOR 30 MINUTES.

THE LOST LIGHT, HAB SUITE 221. TODAY.

NOK NOK

COME IN, *CHROMEDOME*. IT'S UNLOCKED.

HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS ME?

THE SILENCE AFTER YOUR FOOTSTEPS. NO ONE ELSE HAS A REASON TO HESITATE BEFORE KNOCKING.

YOU FEEL GUILTY ABOUT IGNORING SKIDS AND ME.* YOU SHOULDN'T, BY THE WAY.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE IN THE MOOD FOR SHOWING OFF, *NIGHTBEAT*...

*LAST ISSUE.

"...BECAUSE I'VE GOT A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY."

HAB SUITE 208.

WHEN YOU SAY REWIND'S MESSAGE "CHANGED"...

IT'S A *COMPOSITE MESSAGE*.

HE TOOK ALL THESE LITTLE SNIPPETS FROM HIS ARCHIVE AND STITCHED THEM TOGETHER.

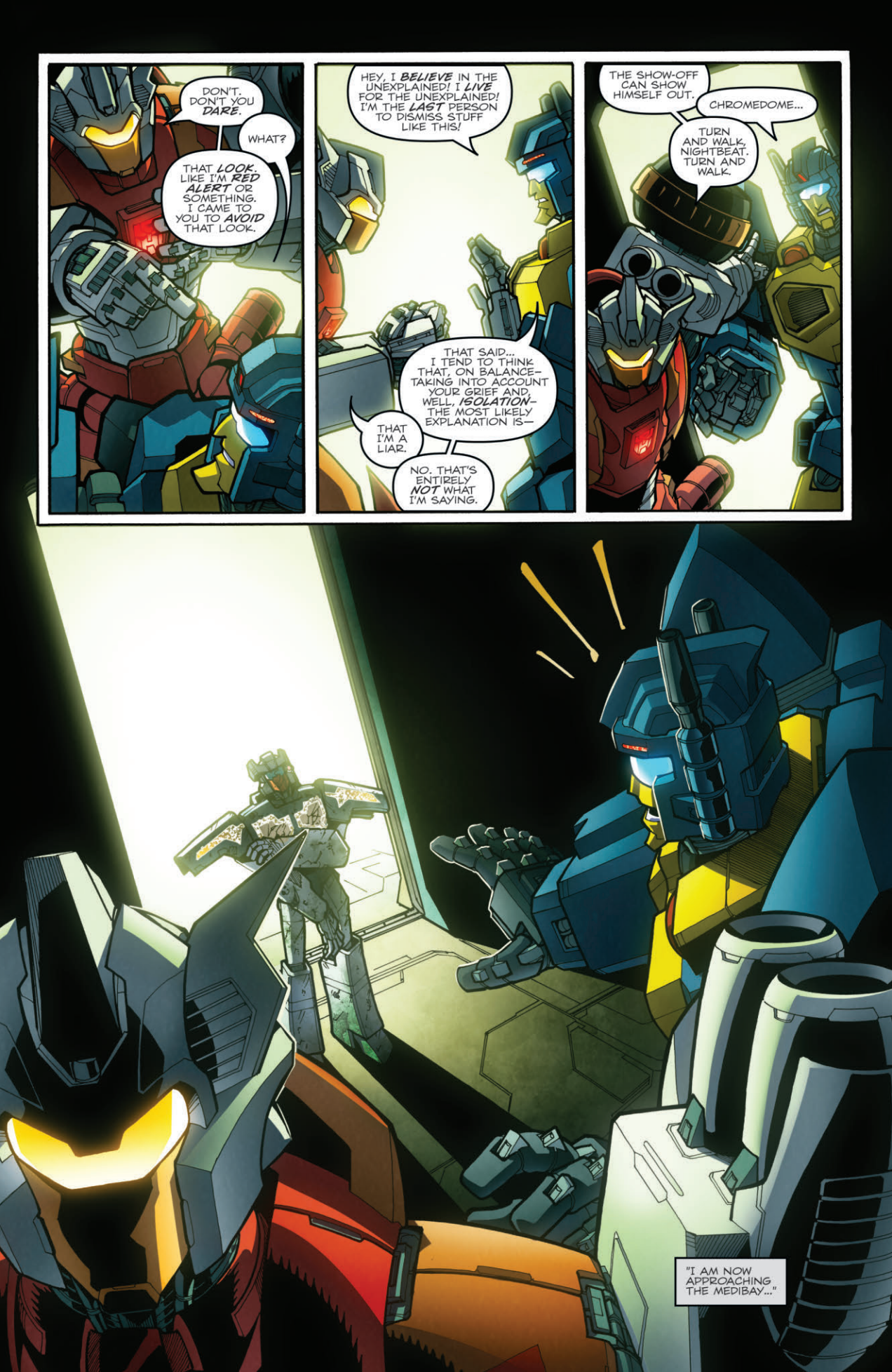
AND AT THE *END* OF THE MESSAGE, INSTEAD OF SAYING... SOMETHING VERY PERSONAL, HE *SCREAMED*.

AND WHAT WAS ON THE MONITOR?

I DON'T KNOW. I HAD MY EYES TURNED OFF AT THE TIME. I'VE TAKEN TO *RATIONING MY SENSES*.

BUT YOU'VE PLAYED THE MESSAGE SINCE.

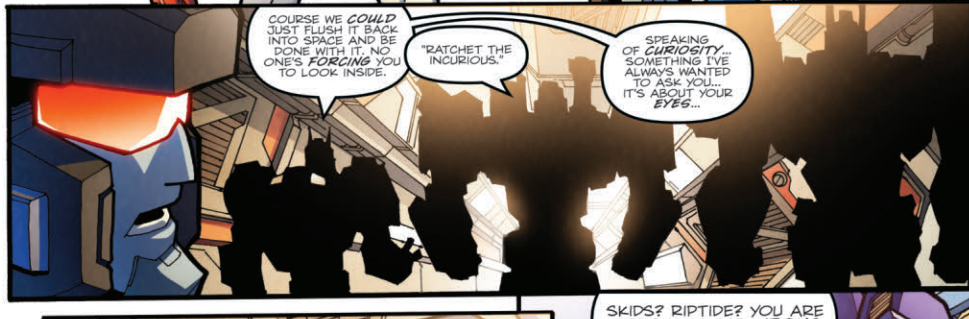
YES. NO SCREAM, NORMAL PICTURE.


DON'T. DON'T YOU DARE.
WHAT?
THAT LOOK. LIKE I'M RED ALERT OR SOMETHING. I CAME TO YOU TO AVOID THAT LOOK.
HEY, I BELIEVE IN THE UNEXPLAINED! I LIVE FOR THE UNEXPLAINED! I'M THE LAST PERSON TO DISMISS STUFF LIKE THIS!
THAT SAID... I TEND TO THINK THAT, ON BALANCE— TAKING INTO ACCOUNT YOUR GRIEF AND, WELL, ISOLATION— THE MOST LIKELY EXPLANATION IS—
THAT I'M A LIAR.
NO. THAT'S ENTIRELY NOT WHAT I'M SAYING.
THE SHOW-OFF CAN SHOW HIMSELF OUT.
CHROMEDOME...
TURN AND WALK, NIGHTBEAT. TURN AND WALK.
"I AM NOW APPROACHING THE MEDIBAY..."

...I AM IN MID-APPROACH.
STILL APPROACHING...
YOU GETTING ANY OF THIS, RIPTIDE?

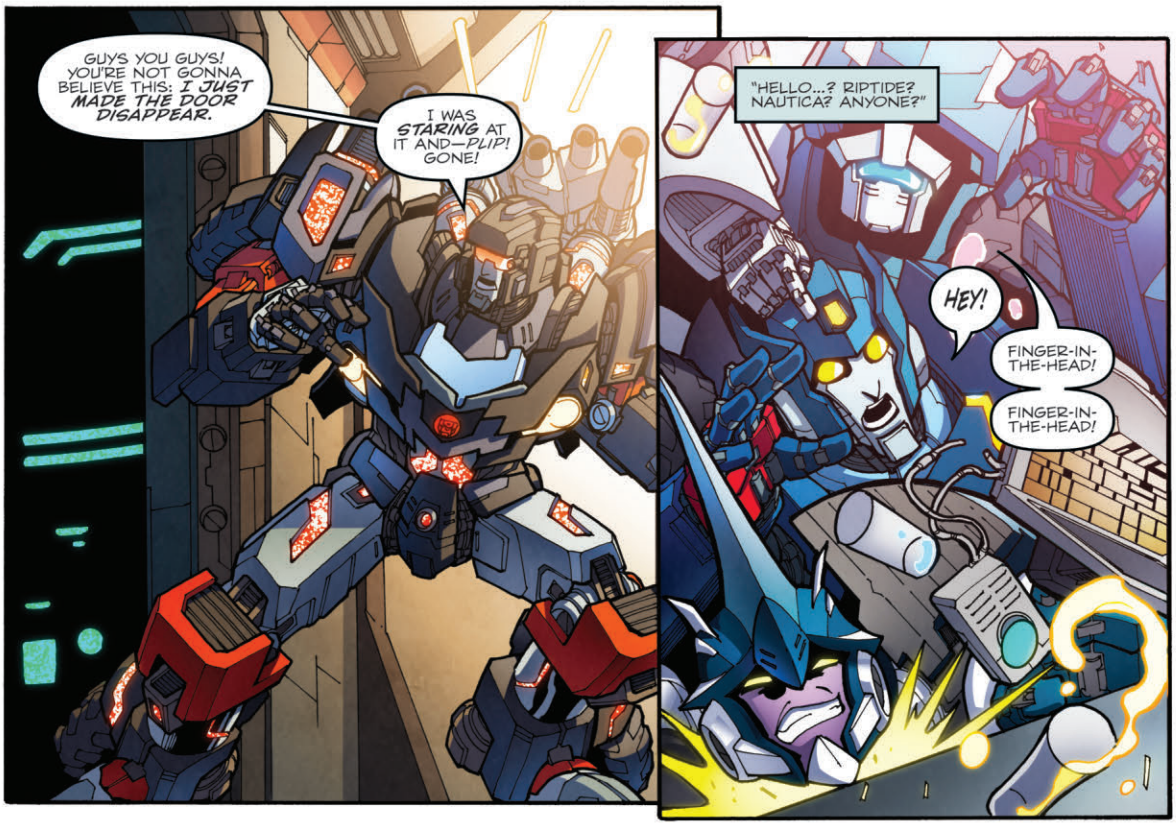
SIGHT AND SOUND, T.C.—SO FEEL FREE TO DROP THE RUNNING COMMENTARY.
I CANNOT BELIEVE YOU MADE HIM WEAR A HEADCAM...
UH-OH. VOICES!
HIDE, TRAILCUTTER! STEALTH MODE!

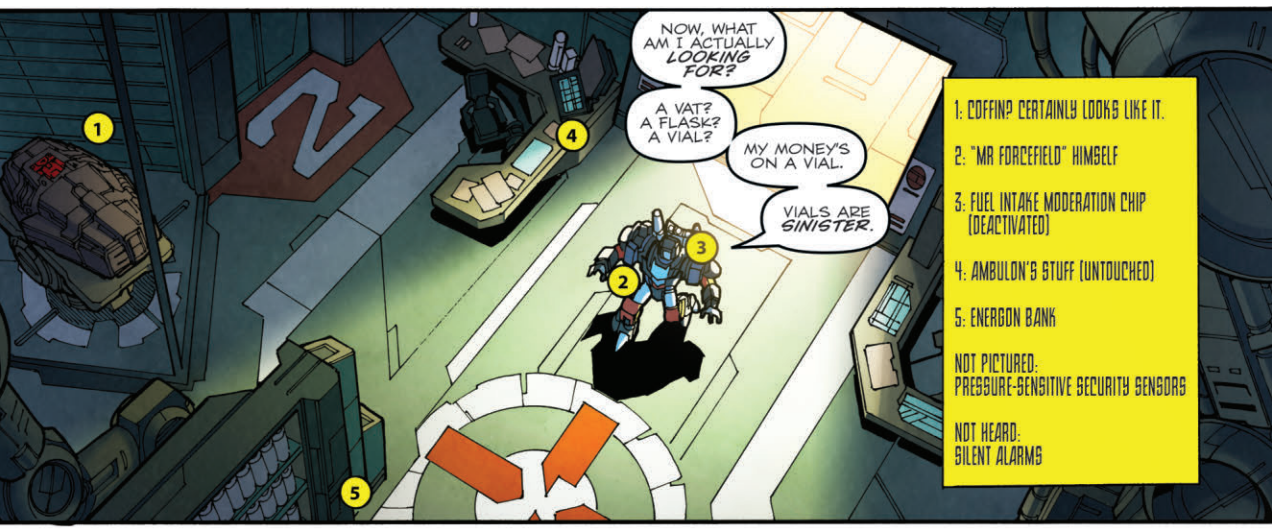
HOW LONG BEFORE WE CAN OPEN IT?
IF WE DO THIS PROPERLY, TEN DAYS.
NO.
WHOEVER'S INSIDE THAT COFFIN—ASSUMING IT IS A COFFIN—WE DON'T KNOW HOW THEY DIED.
IF THE NEXT SCAN IS CLEAN WE COULD MAYBE TAKE OUR CHANCES SOONER.
THEY COULD BE INFECTIOUS. WE SHOULD PLAY THIS BY THE BOOK.
THANK YOU! THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING ALL ALONG.

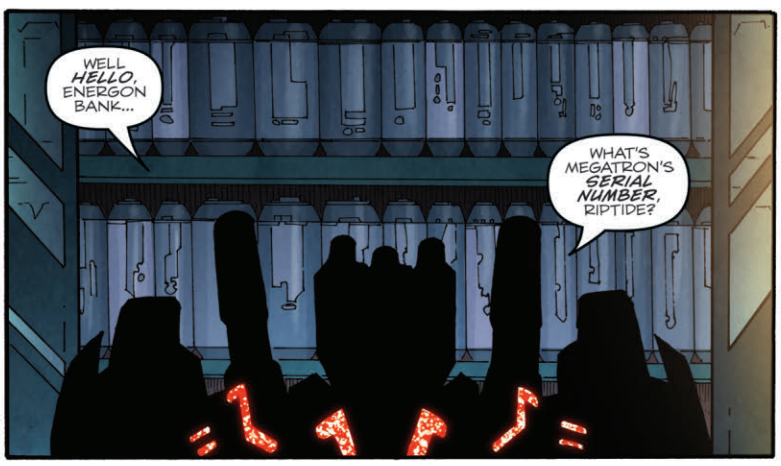

COURSE WE COULD JUST FLUSH IT BACK INTO SPACE AND BE DONE WITH IT. NO ONE'S FORCING YOU TO LOOK INSIDE.
"RATCHET THE INCURIOUS."
SPEAKING OF CURIOSITY... SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK YOU... IT'S ABOUT YOUR EYES...

I'M AT THE MEDIBAY DOOR—THEY'VE DONE SOMETHING TO IT. THEY'VE MADE IT ALL LOCK-Y.
"LOCK-Y"? HOW MANY HAVE YOU HAD?
I THINK I WANT TO PUNCH IT.

SKIDS? RIPTIDE? YOU ARE OFFICIALLY THE WRONG CROWD, AND I CAN'T BELIEVE I EVER FELL IN WITH YOU.
TRUST ME—EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING IS TELLING ME TO PUT A STOP TO THIS. IT'S ONLY THROUGH SHEER FORCE OF WILL THAT I'M ABLE TO KEEP WATCHING.
WELL, I'M BAILING. IF YOU WANT ME I'LL BE IN MY ROOM, WRITING IN THE MARGINS OF THE ASCETIC CYBERTRONIAN—WHICH IS WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING ALL EVENING. UNDERSTOOD?


GUYS YOU GUYS! YOU'RE NOT GONNA BELIEVE THIS: I JUST MADE THE DOOR DISAPPEAR.
I WAS STARING AT IT AND—PLIP! GONE!
"HELLO...? RIPTIDE? NAUTICA? ANYONE?"
HEY!
FINGER-IN-THE-HEAD!
FINGER-IN-THE-HEAD!


NOW, WHAT AM I ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR?
A VAT? A FLASK? A VIAL?
MY MONEY'S ON A VIAL.
VIALS ARE SINISTER.
1: COFFIN? CERTAINLY LOOKS LIKE IT.
2: "MR FORCEFIELD" HIMSELF
3: FUEL INTAKE MODERATION CHIP (DEACTIVATED)
4: AMBULON'S STUFF (UNTOUCHED)
5: ENERGON BANK
NOT PICTURED: PRESSURE-SENSITIVE SECURITY SENSORS
NOT HEARD: SILENT ALARMS


WELL HELLO, ENERGON BANK...
WHAT'S MEGATRON'S SERIAL NUMBER, RIPTIDE?

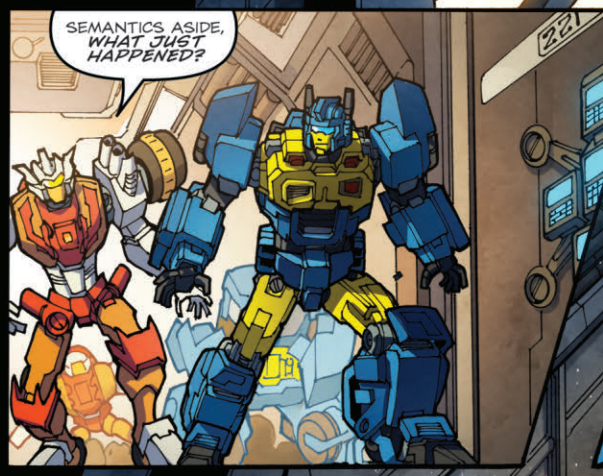
DOESN'T MATTER.

AUTOBOT!
PU-TUH!
PUT IT DOWN, TRAILBREAKER.
TRAILCUTTER.
PUT IT DOWN, TRAILCUTTER. I GUARANTEE IT WON'T BE TO YOUR TASTE.
TOO LATE, MEGSY! I'M SOUPED UP!
I FEEL—
UH.
I FEEL POISONED.
TRAILCUTTER, LISTEN TO—

BACK OFF.
SIGH
LEAVE THIS WITH ME.
GO. THIS WON'T TAKE A MINUTE.
CORRECT. IT'LL TAKE THIRTY.
THIS IS ONE OF MY FANCY NEW FORCEFIELDS.
I'M DISCONNECTED FROM IT, MENTALLY, WHICH ENHANCES ITS STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY.
BRAINSTORM CALLS IT A PANIC BUBBLE—
—AND IT'LL BE THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE IT POPS, WHETHER I LIKE IT OR NOT.
THINK TRAILCUTTER'S OKAY?
JUST BEFORE WE GOT CUT OFF HE WAS MARVELING AT HIS ABILITY TO OPEN A DOOR.
I'D SAY BY NOW HE'S EITHER PASSED OUT, OR HE'S REALIZED THAT THINGS GOT A BIT OUT OF HAND—
"—AND HAS DECIDED TO HAVE A QUIET SIT DOWN."

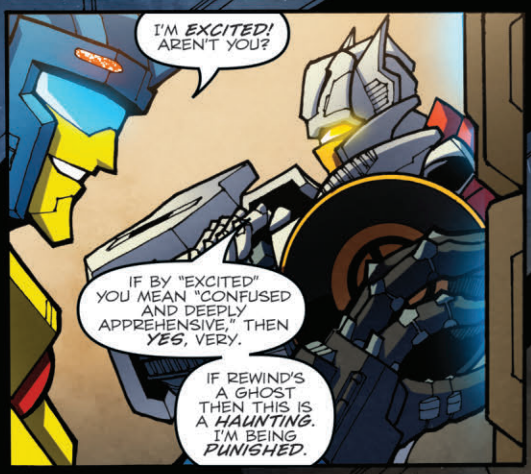
SIX MONTHS AGO.

YOU SAID DATA GHOST. I SAID A COLLECTION OF GHOST DATA.
AND IT'S NOT A CONFIRMED SIGHTING—ALL I KNOW IS THAT ONE MINUTE, REWIND WAS STANDING THERE, AND WHEN YOU TURNED AROUND HE DISAPPEARED.
ONCE I GET BACK TO MY HAB SUITE I CAN TOOL UP AND...
SORRY, CAN'T CONCENTRATE. DATA GHOST!
DATA GHOST DOES SOUND COOLER.

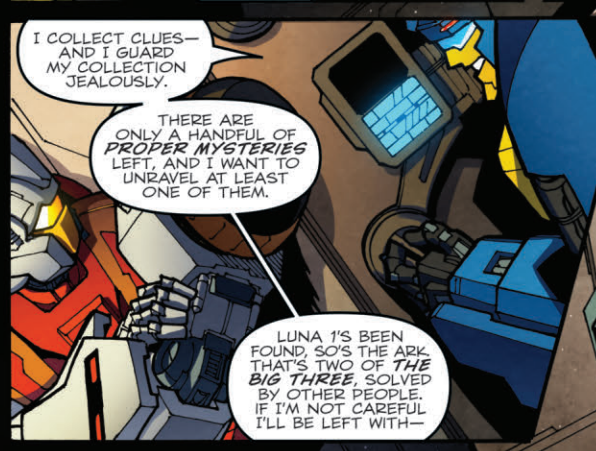

SEMANTICS ASIDE, WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

BUT WHY REWIND?
THINK ABOUT IT! HE WAS A WALKING ARCHIVE—LITERALLY, A BODY OF INFORMATION. ALL THAT DENSE DATA SQUEEZED INTO SUCH A SMALL SPACE, PRESSING DOWN LIKE A—LIKE A—
LIKE A GUN TO YOUR HEAD.
AND IT'S LEFT A MARK! A REWIND-SHAPED DENT IN THE AIR!

RIGHT. BECAUSE I THOUGHT MAYBE, ON SOME LEVEL, AS FARFETCHED AS IT SOUNDS, I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D WILLED HIM BACK TO LIFE?
"WILLED HIM BACK TO LIFE"? WITH WHAT, THE POWER OF LOVE?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.
UGH.
I'D FORGOTTEN WHAT YOU'RE LIKE WHEN YOU'RE CONSUMED.


I'M EXCITED! AREN'T YOU?
IF BY "EXCITED" YOU MEAN "CONFUSED AND DEEPLY APPREHENSIVE," THEN YES, VERY.
IF REWIND'S A GHOST THEN THIS IS A HAUNTING. I'M BEING PUNISHED.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO DESERVE PUNISHMENT?
WELL, FOR ONE THING THERE'S DOMINUS AMBUS...
"AMBUS TEST" AMBUS?
REWIND'S FIRST CONJUNX ENDURA. I PROMISED TO KEEP LOOKING FOR HIM AND I'VE DONE NOTHING.
TO BE HONEST, I—
JEEZ, NIGHTBEAT! YOU SURE YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH LOCKS ON YOUR DOOR?


I COLLECT CLUES—AND I GUARD MY COLLECTION JEALOUSLY.
THERE ARE ONLY A HANDFUL OF PROPER MYSTERIES LEFT, AND I WANT TO UNRAVEL AT LEAST ONE OF THEM.
LUNA 1'S BEEN FOUND, SO'S THE ARK. THAT'S TWO OF THE BIG THREE, SOLVED BY OTHER PEOPLE. IF I'M NOT CAREFUL I'LL BE LEFT WITH—

—NOTHING.

INFORMATION CARRIES WEIGHT. IT'S NOT CORPOREAL, BUT IT HAS ***PRESENCE***. IT CAN BE ***FELT***. IT HANGS IN THE AIR LIKE—LIKE WORDS. LIKE THE MORNING AFTER AN ARGUMENT!
ACTUALLY, NOT LIKE THAT.
THAT'S A BAD ANALOGY.
I'M DISTRACTED, SHUT UP. STOP ***EXPECTING THINGS*** OF ME.
"FINALLY, THE BUBBLE BURSTS!"

THE LOST LIGHT MEDIBAY. NOW.

'S ALRIGHT— I CAN ESCORT MYSELF TO THE BRIG.

ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN DIRECT ME TO A SHUTTLE AND I'LL FLY HOME IN DISGRACE.

BASICALLY, I'M UP FOR ANY PUNISHMENT THAT DOESN'T INVOLVE YOU, ME, AND VERY ONE-SIDED INJURIES.

KLUNK

OW!

WHAT THE HELL?!

I'VE JUST ENGAGED YOUR F.I.M. CHIP, PERMANENTLY.

WITH YOUR HAND?!

FOUR MILLION YEARS OF PRACTICE.

FROM NOW ON, YOU CAN CONSUME AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE OF WHATEVER YOU LIKE, BUT YOU'LL DERIVE NO PLEASURE FROM THE EXPERIENCE.

BUT—

YOU'LL GET USED TO IT. I DID.

BUT I'VE GOT RIGHTS! NO ONE'S ALLOWED TO TOUCH MY F.I.M. CHIP WITHOUT MY CONSENT!

YOU'RE NOT EVEN LISTENING TO ME...

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BREAK IN HERE.

I DIDN'T BREAK IN! THE DOOR JUST—PLIP!

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE A FULL-TIME DIRECTOR OF SECURITY...

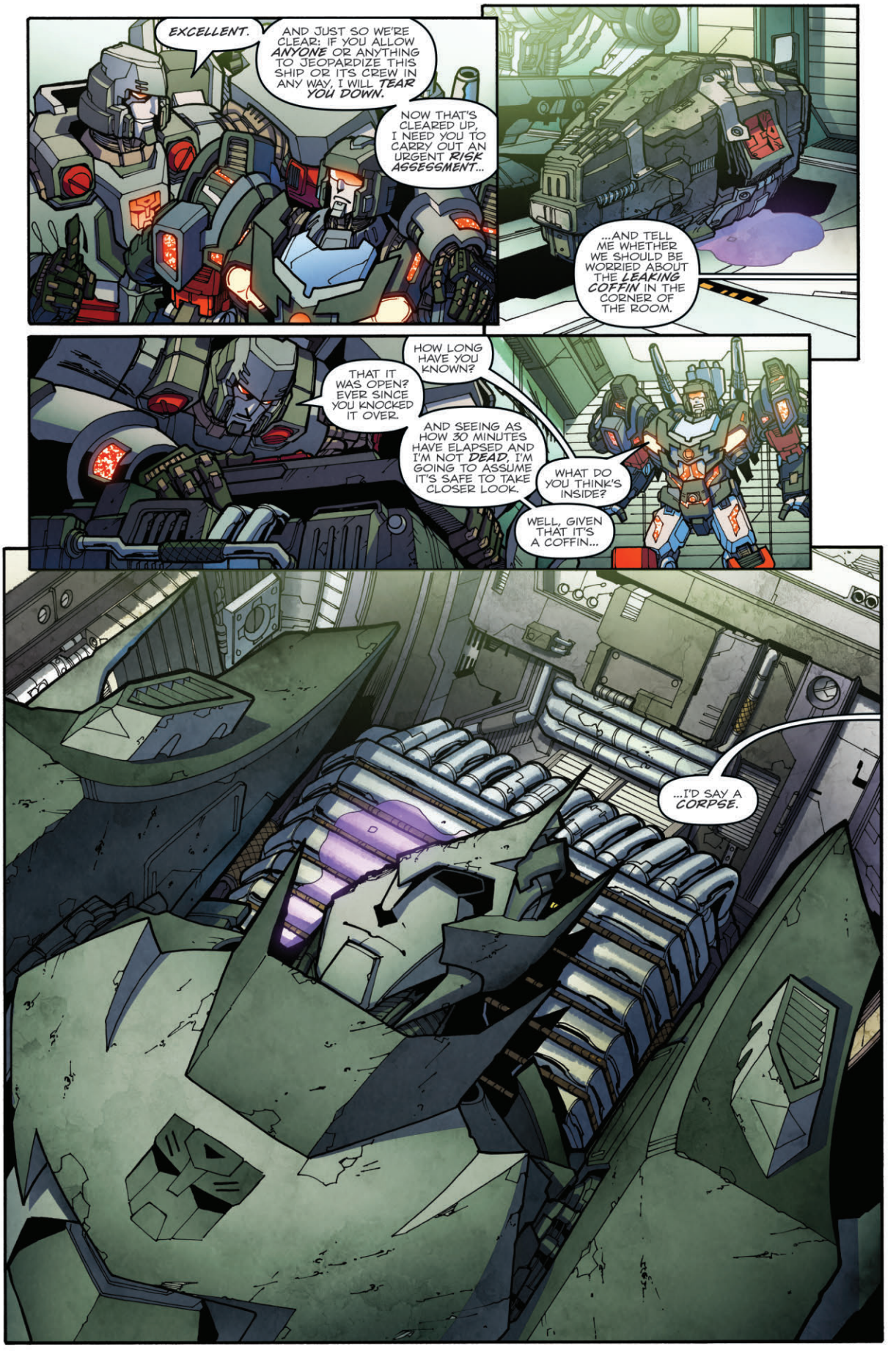
I'VE READ YOUR FILE, TRAILCUTTER. YOU'RE GIFTED BUT FECKLESS.

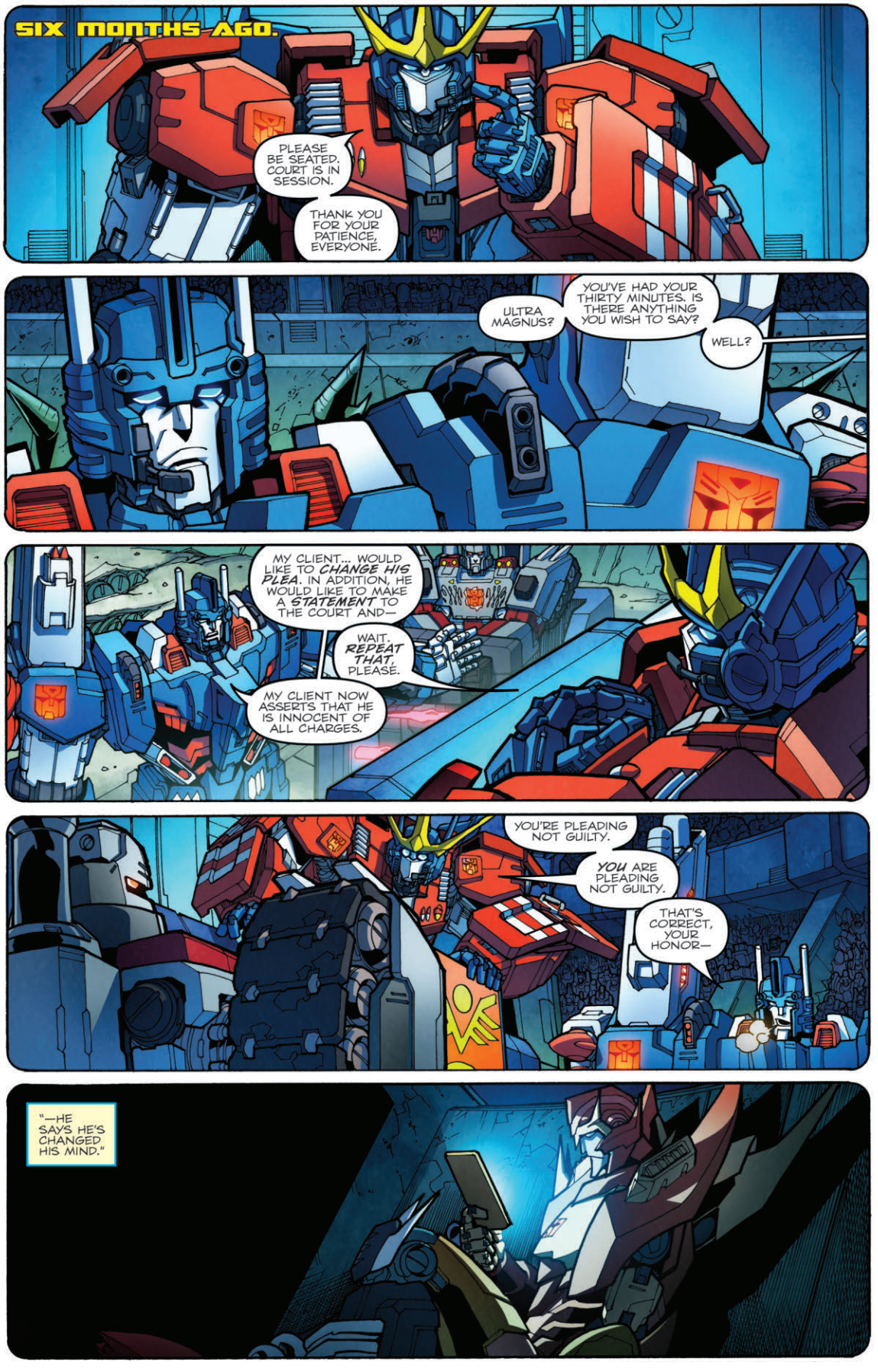
YOU NEED A PROPER JOB.

YOU'RE NOT SERIOUSLY ABOUT TO MAKE ME DIRECTOR OF SECURITY...

I THINK A SPECIALIST LIKE YOU NEEDS A FOCUS, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

IF YOU SAY SO...


EXCELLENT.
AND JUST SO WE'RE CLEAR: IF YOU ALLOW ANYONE OR ANYTHING TO JEOPARDIZE THIS SHIP OR ITS CREW IN ANY WAY, I WILL TEAR YOU DOWN.
NOW THAT'S CLEARED UP, I NEED YOU TO CARRY OUT AN URGENT RISK ASSESSMENT...
...AND TELL ME WHETHER WE SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT THE LEAKING COFFIN IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN?
THAT IT WAS OPEN? EVER SINCE YOU KNOCKED IT OVER.
AND SEEING AS HOW 30 MINUTES HAVE ELAPSED AND I'M NOT DEAD, I'M GOING TO ASSUME IT'S SAFE TO TAKE CLOSER LOOK.
WHAT DO YOU THINK'S INSIDE?
WELL, GIVEN THAT IT'S A COFFIN...
...I'D SAY A CORPSE.


SIX MONTHS AGO.
PLEASE BE SEATED. COURT IS IN SESSION.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE, EVERYONE.
ULTRA MAGNUS?
YOU'VE HAD YOUR THIRTY MINUTES. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WISH TO SAY?
WELL?
MY CLIENT... WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE HIS PLEA. IN ADDITION, HE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT TO THE COURT AND—
WAIT. REPEAT THAT, PLEASE.
MY CLIENT NOW ASSERTS THAT HE IS INNOCENT OF ALL CHARGES.
YOU'RE PLEADING NOT GUILTY.
YOU ARE PLEADING NOT GUILTY.
THAT'S CORRECT, YOUR HONOR—
"—HE SAYS HE'S CHANGED HIS MIND."

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #29 COVER B

by **NICK ROCHE** Colors by **JOSH BURCHAM**

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #30 COVER A

by **ALEX MILNE** Colors by **JOANA LAFUENTE**

LUNA 2.
SIX MONTHS AGO.

ULTRA MAGNUS? THIS *STATEMENT* THAT YOUR CLIENT HAS ASKED YOU TO MAKE ON HIS BEHALF...

IF *YOUR HONOR* PLEASES, I AM INSTRUCTED TO ADDRESS THE *CROWD* RATHER THAN THE *COURT*.

VERY WELL.

"I DID NOT *RESIST* WHEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY OR *PROTEST* WHEN ADVISED OF THE CHARGES LEVELED AGAINST ME. I WAS PREPARED TO LET JUSTICE TAKE ITS COURSE.

"WHAT FOLLOWED WAS NOT JUSTICE.

"I NOW KNOW THAT AUTOBOT HIGH COMMAND IS SO KEEN TO PROMOTE A *STERILIZED WARTIME NARRATIVE*—

"—AN ACCOUNT OF THE LAST FOUR MILLION YEARS THAT DISBURDENS THEM OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR *ANY* WRONG-DOING—

"—THAT THEY WILL THREATEN TO *MENTALLY VIOLATE* A POLITICAL PRISONER UNLESS HE ENDORSES THEIR *HIGHLY PARTISAN* VERSION OF EVENTS.

"IN LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING, I SUBMIT THAT MY EARLIER GUILTY PLEA—

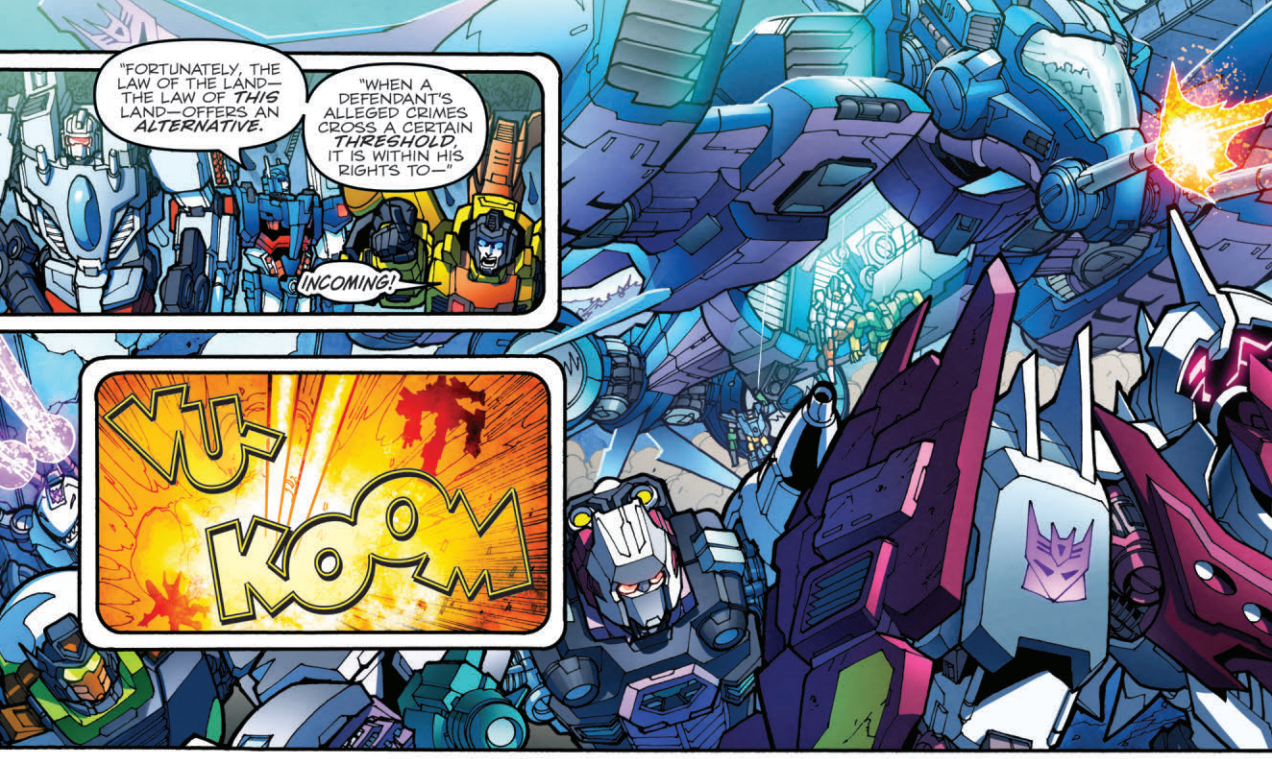
"—A PLEA I NOW UNEQUIVOCALLY *RETRACT*—

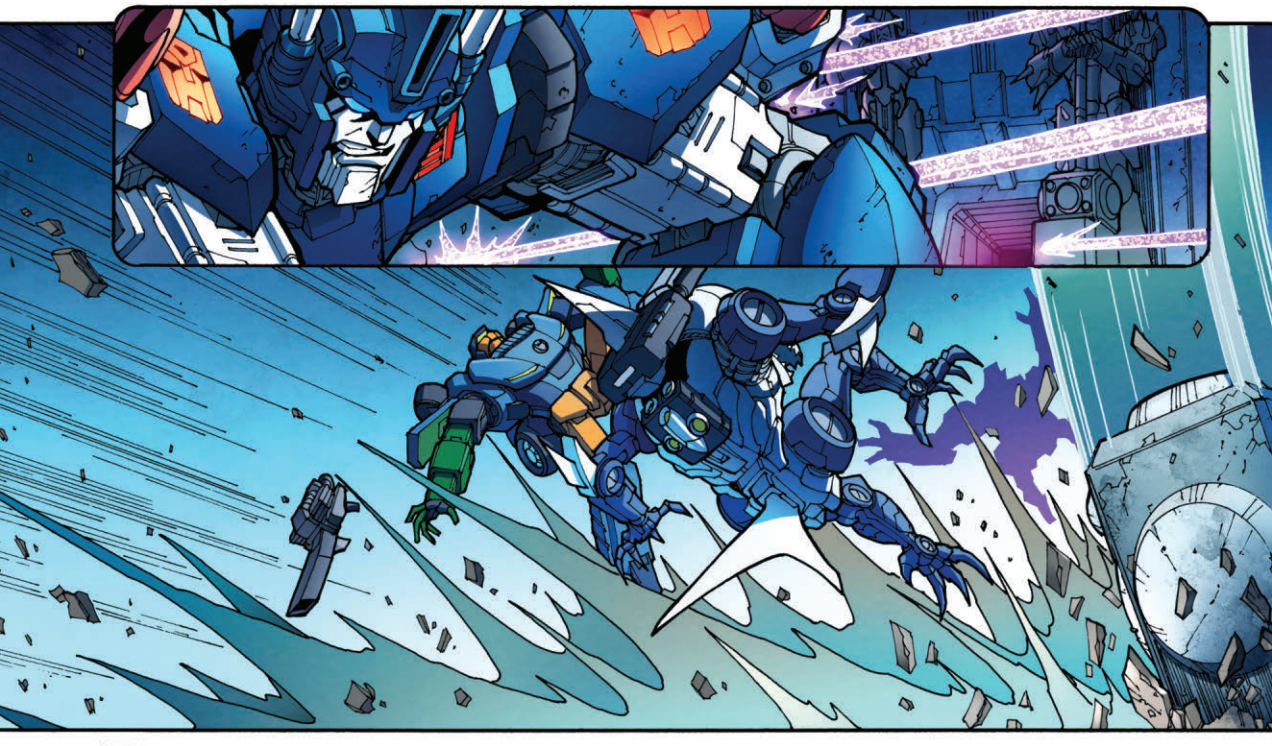
"—IS EVIDENCE NOT OF *CRIMINALITY*, BUT *COERCION*.

"AS THIS TRIAL HAS PROGRESSED, MY DISQUIET HAS GROWN—TO THE POINT WHERE I AM NO LONGER CONFIDENT THAT THIS COURT CAN DELIVER A FAIR VERDICT.

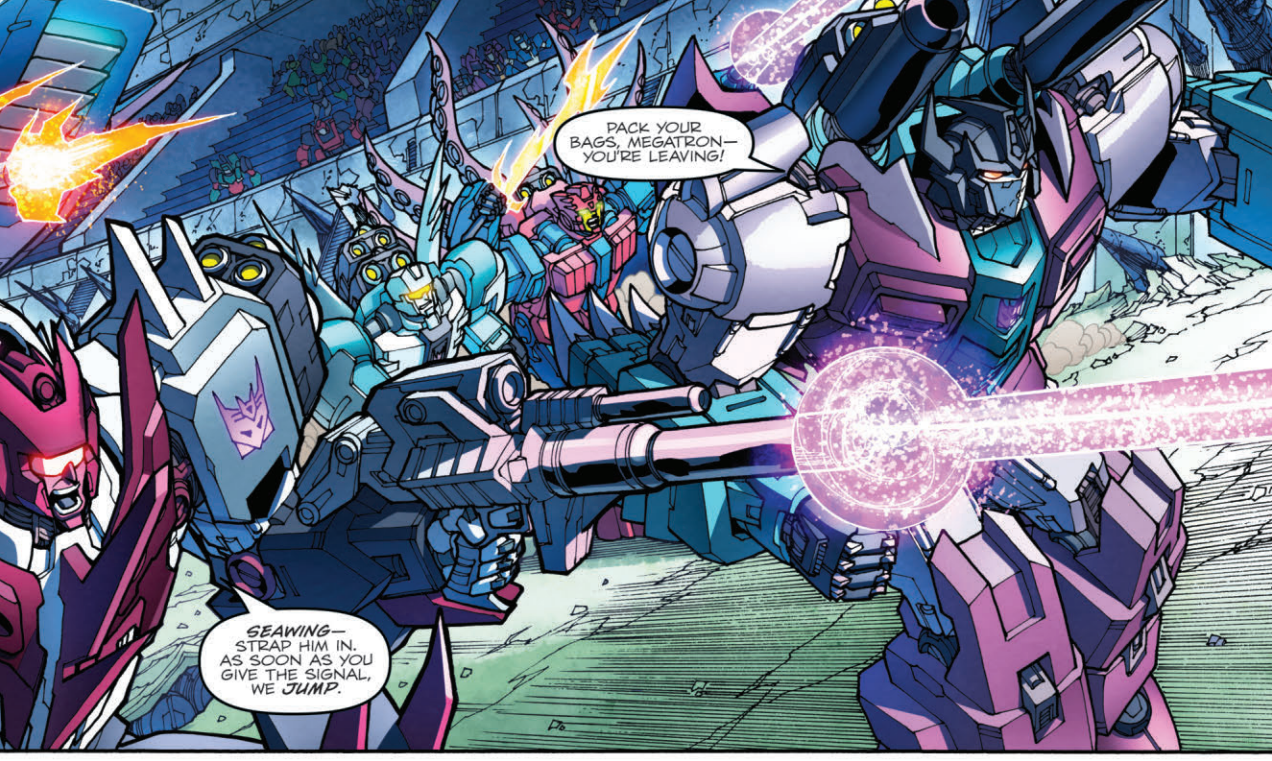
"I ASK YOU: HOW CAN IT BE IN KEEPING WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF *NATURAL JUSTICE*—

"—FOR ONE'S *ARCHENEMY* TO SIT IN JUDGMENT ON HIM?

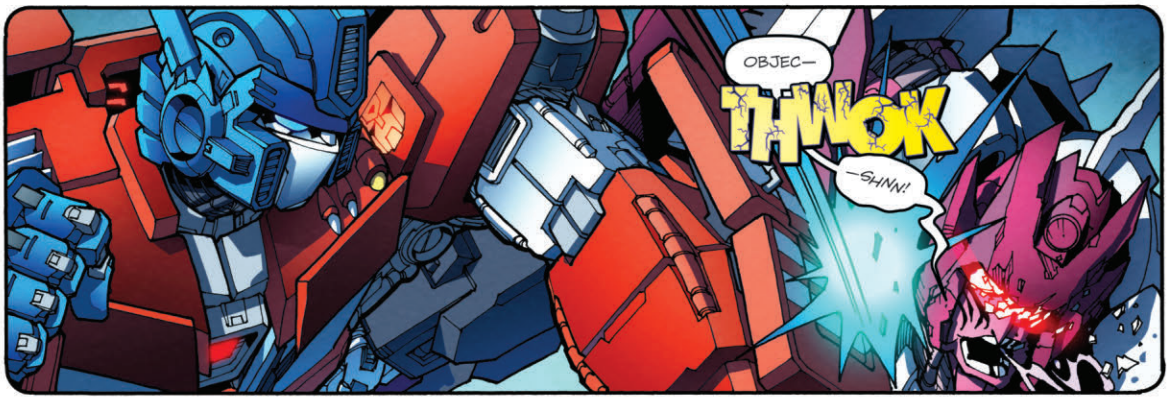

"FORTUNATELY, THE LAW OF THE LAND—THE LAW OF *THIS* LAND—OFFERS AN *ALTERNATIVE.*
"WHEN A DEFENDANT'S ALLEGED CRIMES CROSS A CERTAIN *THRESHOLD,* IT IS WITHIN HIS RIGHTS TO—"
INCOMING!
VU-KOOM



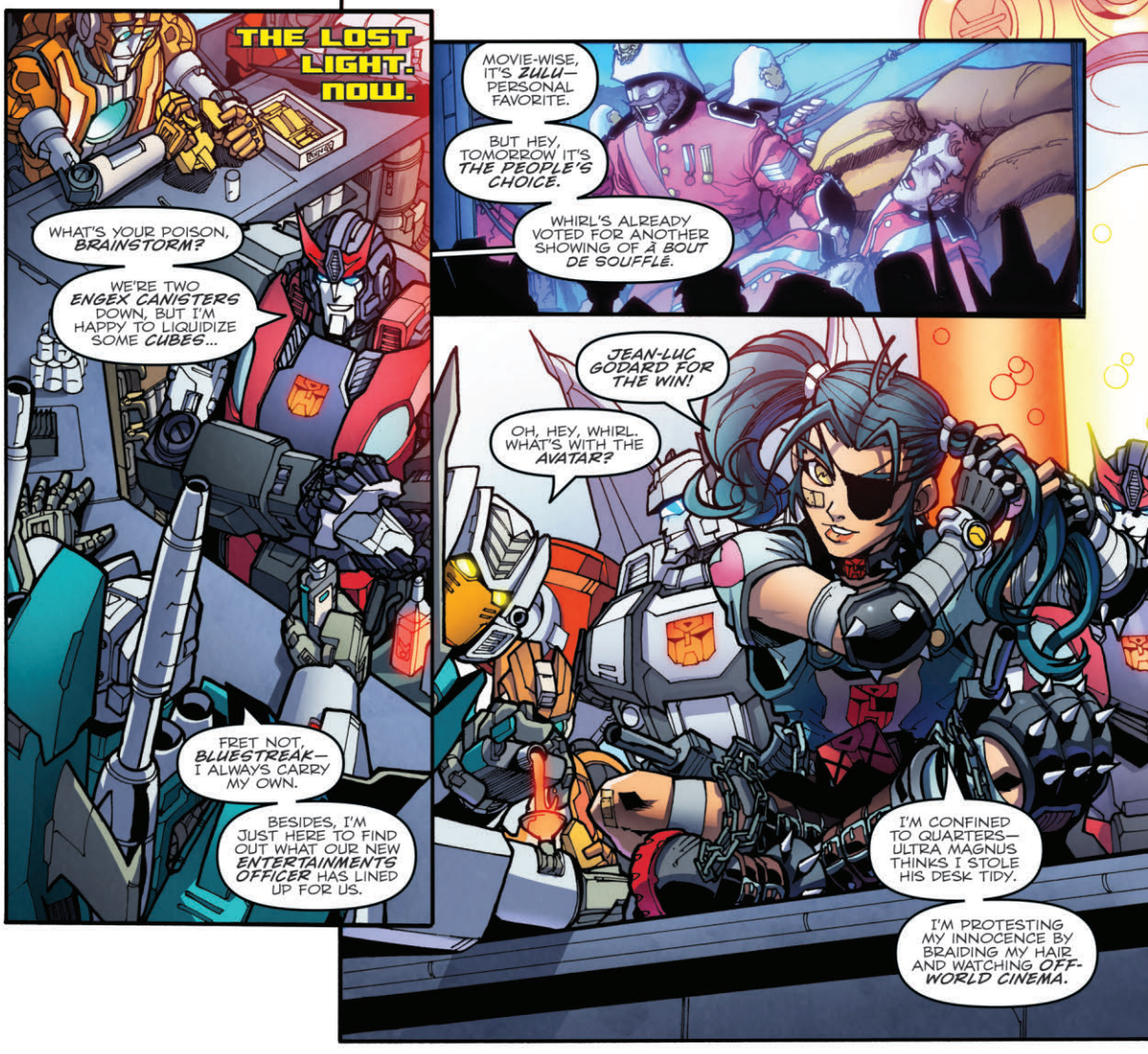
I WILL ALLOW IT.

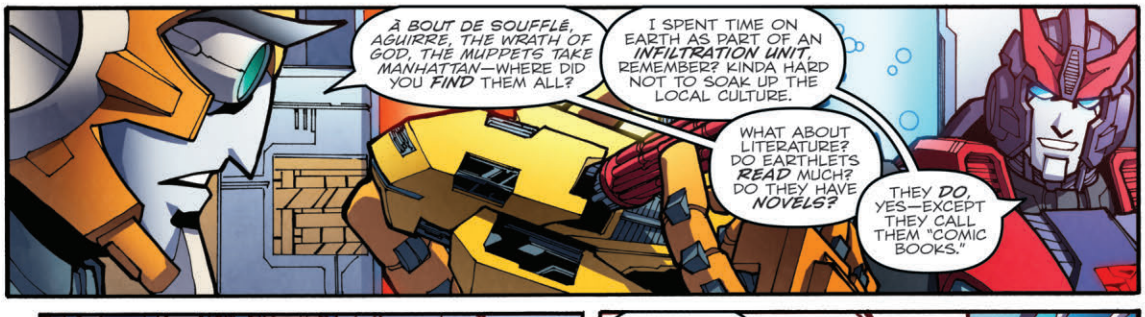

PACK YOUR BAGS, MEGATRON— YOU'RE LEAVING!
SEAWING— STRAP HIM IN. AS SOON AS YOU GIVE THE SIGNAL, WE *JUMP*.

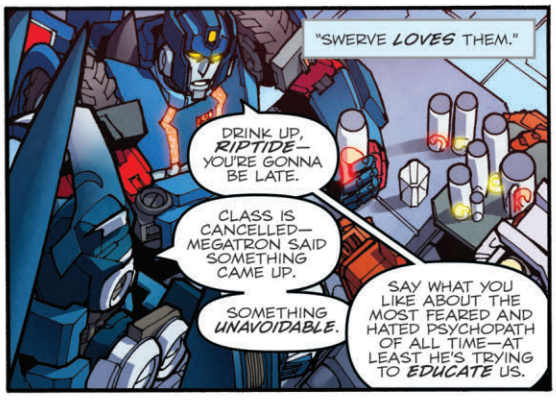
YOUR HONOR—
IS IT AN *ABUSE OF PROCESS* TO REQUEST THAT THE PRESIDING JUDGE *INTERVENE?*


OBJEC—
THWOK
—SHNN!

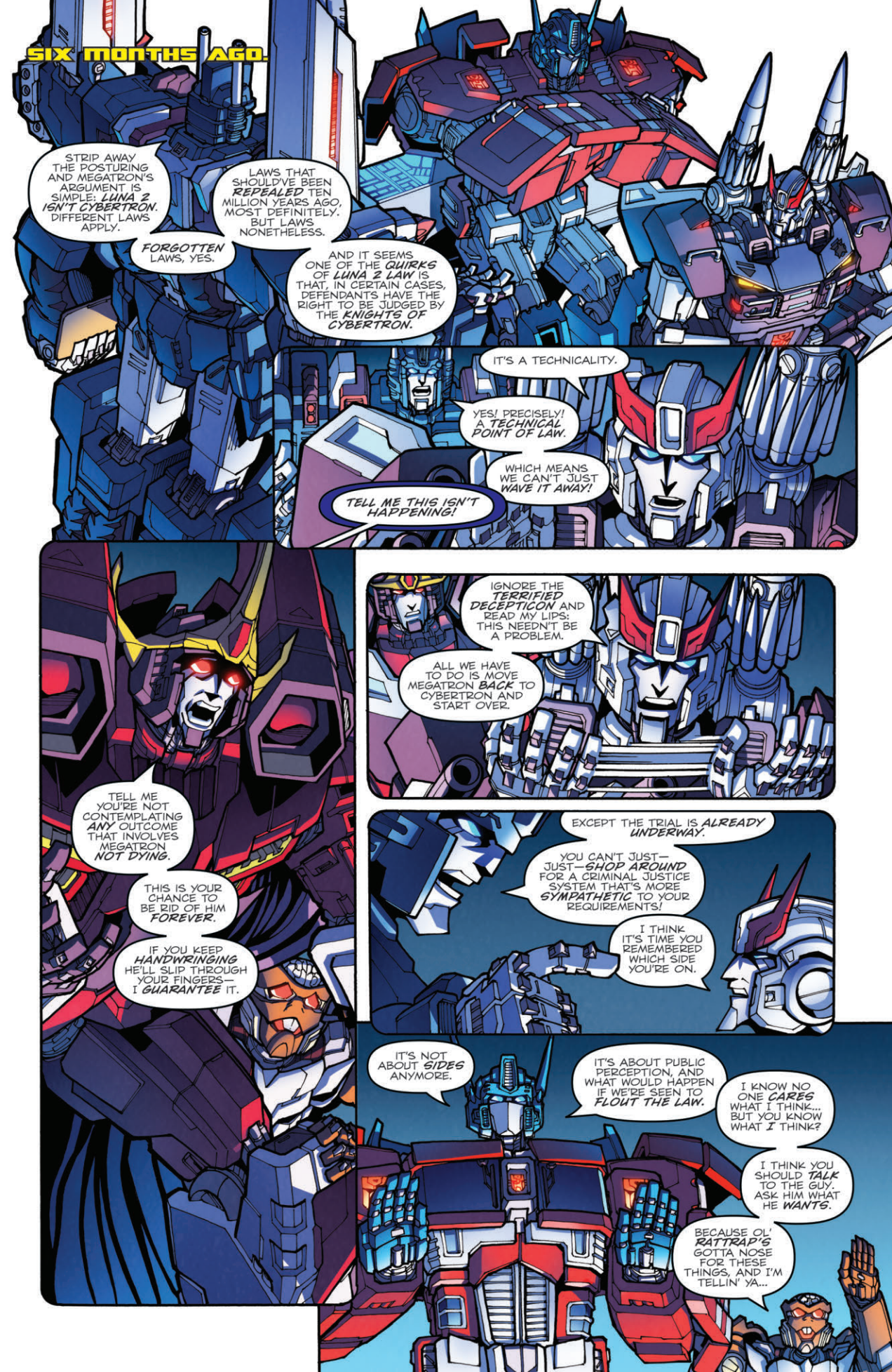
HOLD ON, MEGATRON! I'M COMING!
I'M WEARING A SPARE TELEPORT PACK! PUT IT ON AND WE'LL GET YOU TO SAFETY!
THE BACKPACK!
GRAB IT AND—
MEGATRON?
I'M SORRY, SEAWING.
IT WAS A NICE GESTURE.
KOOM
KOOM
THERE WILL BE A BRIEF RECESS...

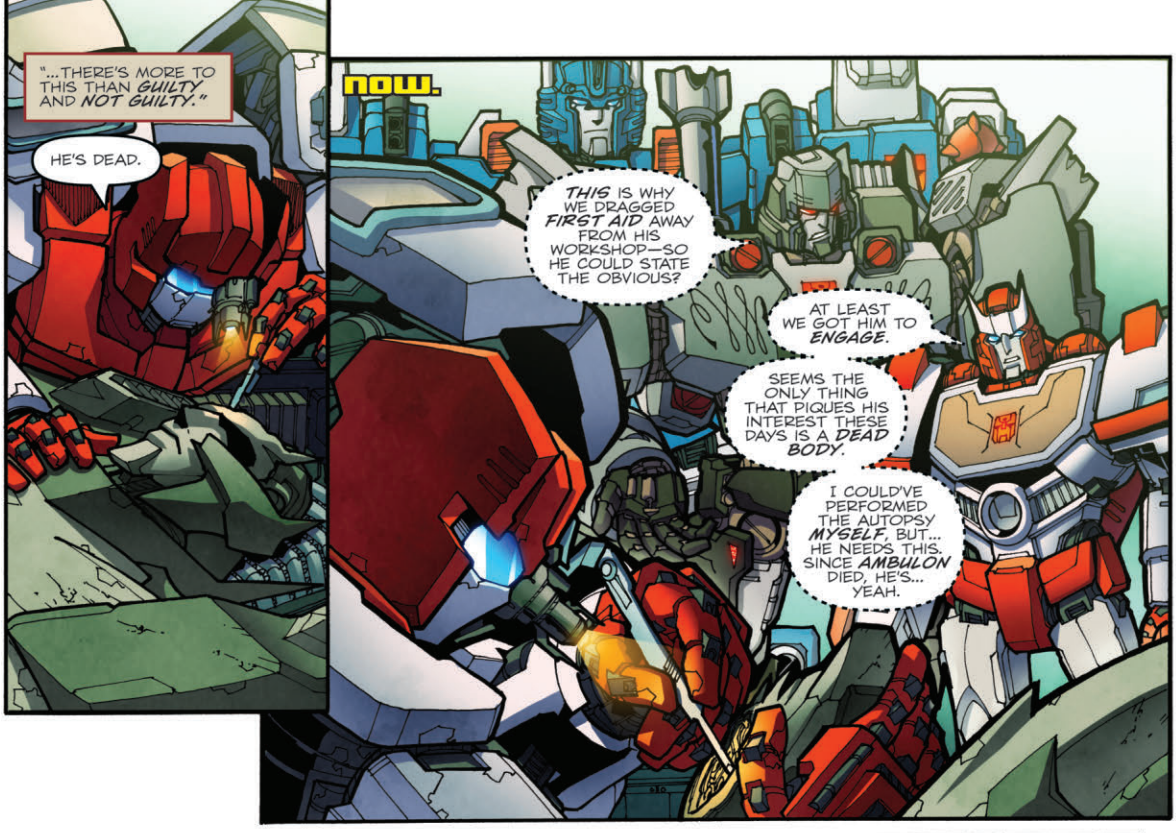

THE LOST LIGHT. NOW.
WHAT'S YOUR POISON, BRAINSTORM?
WE'RE TWO ENGEX CANISTERS DOWN, BUT I'M HAPPY TO LIQUIDIZE SOME CUBES...
FRET NOT, BLUESTREAK—I ALWAYS CARRY MY OWN.
BESIDES, I'M JUST HERE TO FIND OUT WHAT OUR NEW ENTERTAINMENTS OFFICER HAS LINED UP FOR US.
MOVIE-WISE, IT'S ZULU—PERSONAL FAVORITE.
BUT HEY, TOMORROW IT'S THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE.
WHIRL'S ALREADY VOTED FOR ANOTHER SHOWING OF À BOUT DE SOUFFLÉ.
JEAN-LUC GODARD FOR THE WIN!
OH, HEY, WHIRL. WHAT'S WITH THE AVATAR?
I'M CONFINED TO QUARTERS—ULTRA MAGNUS THINKS I STOLE HIS DESK TIDY.
I'M PROTESTING MY INNOCENCE BY BRAIDING MY HAIR AND WATCHING OFF-WORLD CINEMA.


À BOUT DE SOUFFLÉ, AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD, THE MUPPETS TAKE MANHATTAN—WHERE DID YOU FIND THEM ALL?
I SPENT TIME ON EARTH AS PART OF AN INFILTRATION UNIT. REMEMBER? KINDA HARD NOT TO SOAK UP THE LOCAL CULTURE.
WHAT ABOUT LITERATURE? DO EARTHLETS READ MUCH? DO THEY HAVE NOVELS?
THEY DO, YES—EXCEPT THEY CALL THEM "COMIC BOOKS."


"SWERVE LOVES THEM."
DRINK UP, RIPTIDE—YOU'RE GONNA BE LATE.
CLASS IS CANCELLED—MEGATRON SAID SOMETHING CAME UP.
SOMETHING UNAVOIDABLE.
SAY WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MOST FEARED AND HATED PSYCHOPATH OF ALL TIME—AT LEAST HE'S TRYING TO EDUCATE US.

HE'S TRYING TO DISTRACT US.
WHILE WE'RE BUSY LEARNING ABOUT THE KNIGHTS, HE'S DEVISING WAYS TO WIN US OVER, KILL US, REBUILD THE DECEPTICONS, AND TAKE OVER THE UNIVERSE.
THAT'S WHAT I NEED: GOALS.


SIX MONTHS AGO.
STRIP AWAY THE POSTURING AND MEGATRON'S ARGUMENT IS SIMPLE: LUNA 2 ISN'T CYBERTRON. DIFFERENT LAWS APPLY.
LAWS THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN REPEALED TEN MILLION YEARS AGO, MOST DEFINITELY. BUT LAWS NONETHELESS.
FORGOTTEN LAWS, YES.
AND IT SEEMS ONE OF THE QUIRKS OF LUNA 2 LAW IS THAT, IN CERTAIN CASES, DEFENDANTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE JUDGED BY THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON.
IT'S A TECHNICALITY.
YES! PRECISELY! A TECHNICAL POINT OF LAW.
WHICH MEANS WE CAN'T JUST WAVE IT AWAY!
TELL ME THIS ISN'T HAPPENING!
IGNORE THE TERRIFIED DECEPTICON AND READ MY LIPS: THIS NEEDN'T BE A PROBLEM.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS MOVE MEGATRON BACK TO CYBERTRON AND START OVER.
TELL ME YOU'RE NOT CONTEMPLATING ANY OUTCOME THAT INVOLVES MEGATRON NOT DYING.
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO BE RID OF HIM FOREVER.
IF YOU KEEP HANDWRINGING HE'LL SLIP THROUGH YOUR FINGERS— I GUARANTEE IT.
EXCEPT THE TRIAL IS ALREADY UNDERWAY.
YOU CAN'T JUST— JUST—SHOP AROUND FOR A CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM THAT'S MORE SYMPATHETIC TO YOUR REQUIREMENTS!
I THINK IT'S TIME YOU REMEMBERED WHICH SIDE YOU'RE ON.
IT'S NOT ABOUT SIDES ANYMORE.
IT'S ABOUT PUBLIC PERCEPTION, AND WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE'RE SEEN TO FLOUT THE LAW.
I KNOW NO ONE CARES WHAT I THINK... BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK?
I THINK YOU SHOULD TALK TO THE GUY. ASK HIM WHAT HE WANTS.
BECAUSE OL' RATTRAP'S GOTTA NOSE FOR THESE THINGS, AND I'M TELLIN' YA...


"...THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN GUILTY AND NOT GUILTY."
HE'S DEAD.
now.
THIS IS WHY WE DRAGGED FIRST AID AWAY FROM HIS WORKSHOP—SO HE COULD STATE THE OBVIOUS?
AT LEAST WE GOT HIM TO ENGAGE.
SEEMS THE ONLY THING THAT PIQUES HIS INTEREST THESE DAYS IS A DEAD BODY.
I COULD'VE PERFORMED THE AUTOPSY MYSELF, BUT... HE NEEDS THIS. SINCE AMBULON DIED, HE'S... YEAH.

CAUSE OF DEATH: SPARK FAILURE TRIGGERED BY THE REMOVAL OF THE LEXIOMATIC AND TRIXIOMATIC PORTIONS OF THE BRAIN.
THE CUT IS CLEAN AND THE CIRCUITRY IS CAUTERIZED.
I'M GUESSING THEY USED A HOT BLADE.
THE FRACTURE LINES AROUND THE MOUTH SUGGEST THEY CHANGED HIS EXPRESSION AFTER HE DIED.

THEY RESET HIS FACE? WHY?
BECAUSE FEW THINGS IN LIFE ARE MORE DISCOMFITING THAN A SCREAMING CORPSE.
SO WE'RE THINKING WHAT, A FAILED OPERATION? HAM-FISTED SHADOWPLAY?
HARD TO SAY. I'LL KNOW MORE ONCE I'VE ANALYZED THE INNERMOST ENERGON.

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE THE CALL?
HE'S NOT TOO HAPPY WITH ME AT THE MOMENT.
I'VE ALREADY SPOKEN TO HIM. HE SHOULD BE HERE ANY MINUTE.
AND YOU DIDN'T TELL HIM WHAT IT WAS ABOUT...
NO. GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES—

WORLD, SHUT YOUR MOUTH

PART 3: PREDESTINATION: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

"—I THOUGHT THIS WAS BETTER *FACE-TO-FACE.*"

...

...

RODIMUS...?

AT LEAST SAY *SOMETHING.*

YES, THIS IS BECOMING TIRESOME. AS CAPTAIN OF THIS SHIP, I EXPECT—

CO-CAPTAIN! NOT "CAPTAIN"! *CO*-CAPTAIN!

HOW MANY TIMES?

IT'S NOT EVEN A PROPER RANK.

OPTIMUS MADE IT UP SO YOU WOULDN'T GET UPSET.

ACTUALLY, YOU KNOW WHAT? I DON'T CARE. I'VE JUST BEEN ASKED TO *IDENTIFY MY OWN CORPSE.*

FINALLY—SOMETHING TO SHAKE YOU OUT OF YOUR SELF-INDULGENT MALAISE.

MY *WHAT?*

YOU'VE BEEN *SULKING IN THE SHADOWS* EVER SINCE WE TOOK OFF.

I'VE BEEN *TAKING STOCK!*

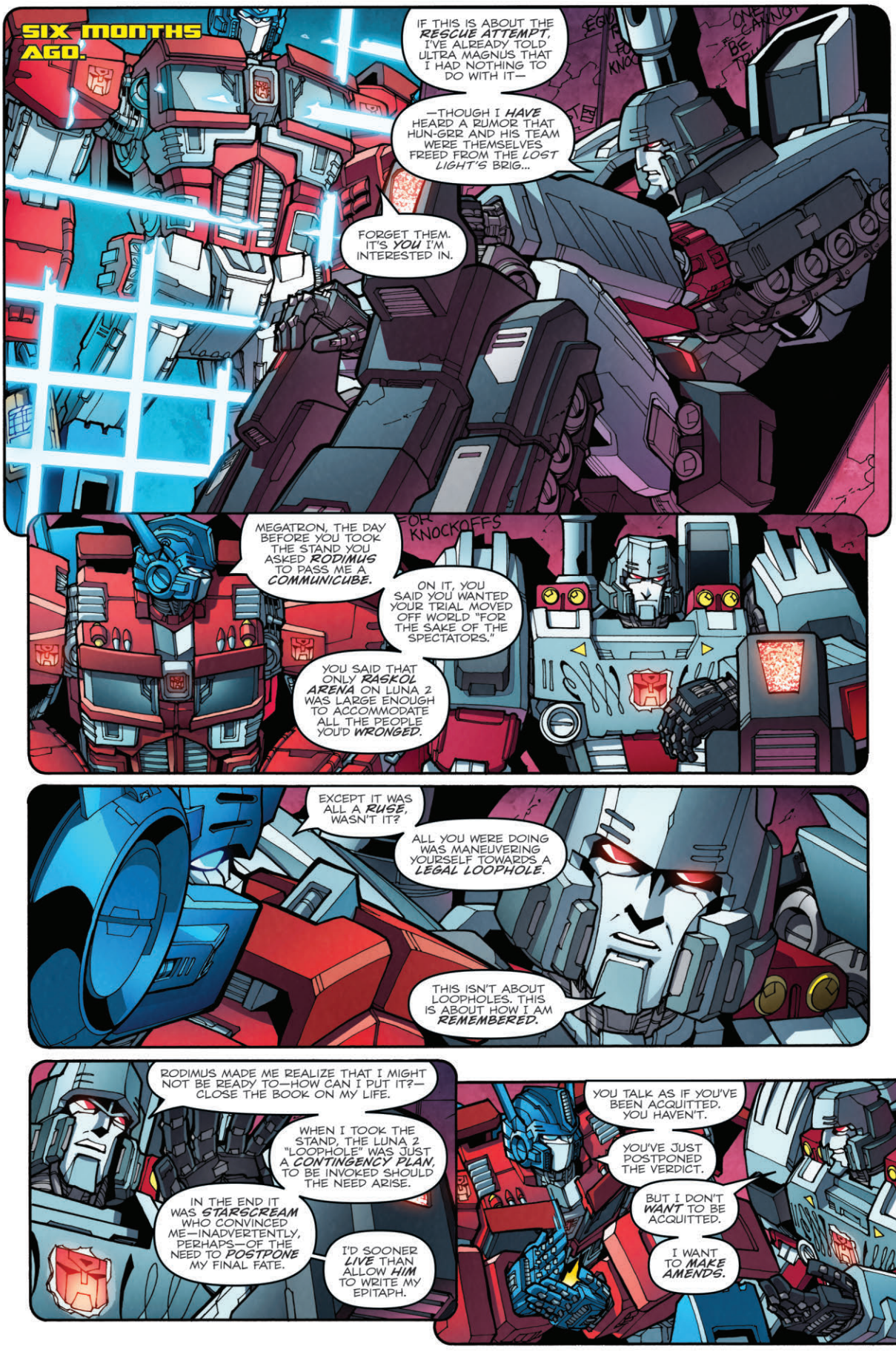
NO, OPTIMUS "TAKES STOCK." *I* "TAKE STOCK." YOU SULK. YOU'RE SULKING *NOW.*

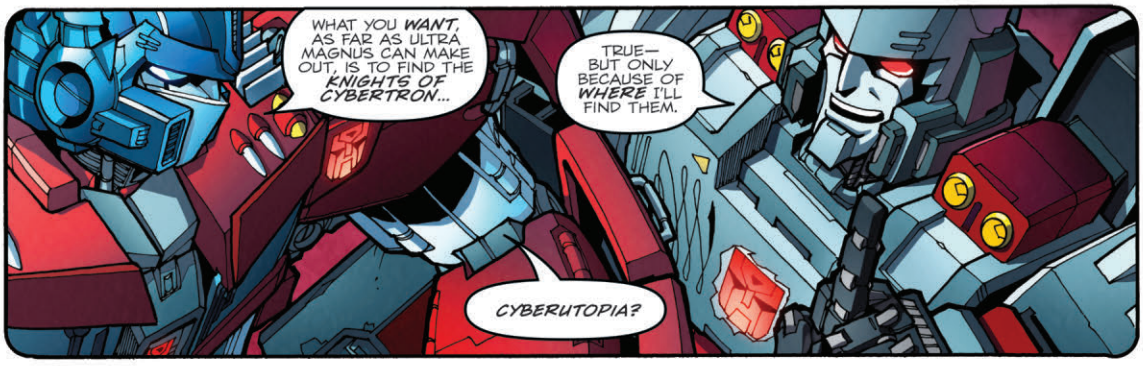
I'M *CONFRONTING MY OWN MORTALITY!* I'M HAVING ONE OF THOSE—ONE OF THOSE *EXISTENTIAL CRISISES!*

CRISES.

NOT NOW, MAGNUS.

NOT NOW...


SIX MONTHS AGO.
IF THIS IS ABOUT THE RESCUE ATTEMPT, I'VE ALREADY TOLD ULTRA MAGNUS THAT I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT—
—THOUGH I HAVE HEARD A RUMOR THAT HUN-GRR AND HIS TEAM WERE THEMSELVES FREED FROM THE LOST LIGHT'S BRIG...
FORGET THEM. IT'S YOU I'M INTERESTED IN.
MEGATRON, THE DAY BEFORE YOU TOOK THE STAND YOU ASKED RODIMUS TO PASS ME A COMMUNICUBE.
ON IT, YOU SAID YOU WANTED YOUR TRIAL MOVED OFF WORLD "FOR THE SAKE OF THE SPECTATORS."
YOU SAID THAT ONLY RASKOL ARENA ON LUNA 2 WAS LARGE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE ALL THE PEOPLE YOU'D WRONGED.
EXCEPT IT WAS ALL A RUSE, WASN'T IT?
ALL YOU WERE DOING WAS MANEUVERING YOURSELF TOWARDS A LEGAL LOOPHOLE.
THIS ISN'T ABOUT LOOPHOLES. THIS IS ABOUT HOW I AM REMEMBERED.
RODIMUS MADE ME REALIZE THAT I MIGHT NOT BE READY TO—HOW CAN I PUT IT?—CLOSE THE BOOK ON MY LIFE.
WHEN I TOOK THE STAND, THE LUNA 2 "LOOPHOLE" WAS JUST A CONTINGENCY PLAN, TO BE INVOKED SHOULD THE NEED ARISE.
IN THE END IT WAS STARSCREAM WHO CONVINCED ME—INADVERTENTLY, PERHAPS—OF THE NEED TO POSTPONE MY FINAL FATE.
I'D SOONER LIVE THAN ALLOW HIM TO WRITE MY EPITAPH.
YOU TALK AS IF YOU'VE BEEN ACQUITTED. YOU HAVEN'T.
YOU'VE JUST POSTPONED THE VERDICT.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE ACQUITTED.
I WANT TO MAKE AMENDS.


WHAT YOU WANT, AS FAR AS ULTRA MAGNUS CAN MAKE OUT, IS TO FIND THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON...
TRUE— BUT ONLY BECAUSE OF WHERE I'LL FIND THEM.
CYBERUTOPIA?

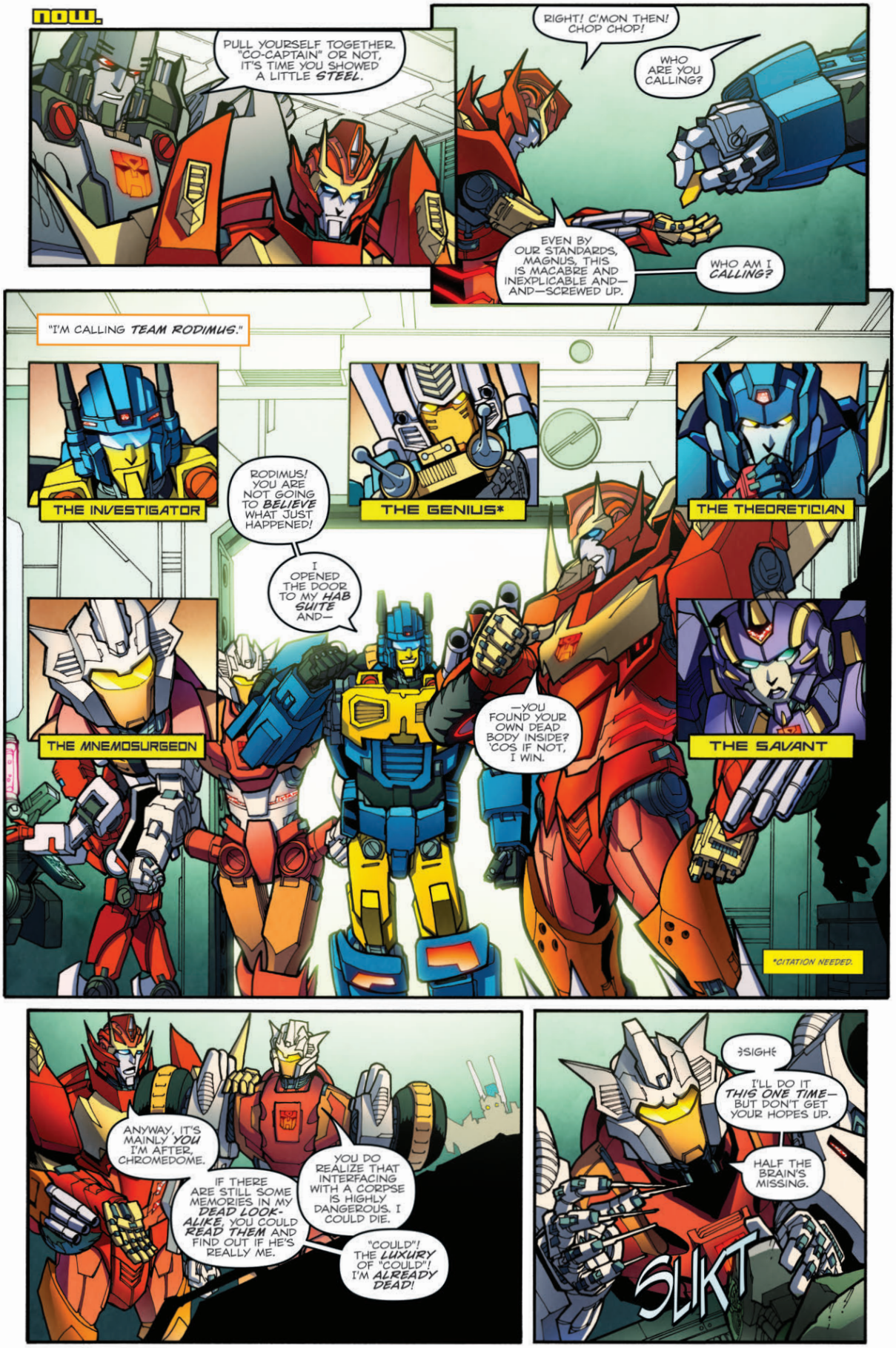
LISTEN. FOUR MILLION YEARS AGO I DECIDED TO CHANGE HOW WE LIVED.
I RESORTED TO FORCE ONLY WHEN I REALIZED THAT THE SYSTEM HAD BEEN ENGINEERED TO WITHSTAND EVERY OTHER FORM OF DISSENT.
IN THE END, YES, I WENT TOO FAR—I BROKE THE PLANET.
AND THAT, OPTIMUS, IS WHY I OWE IT TO YOU—TO EVERYONE—TO FIND A REPLACEMENT.

PUT ME ON THE LOST LIGHT AND LET ME FIND CYBERUTOPIA. I PROMISE YOU—I GUARANTEE YOU—THAT I CAN SUCCEED WHERE RODIMUS HAS FAILED.
ONCE I'VE SECURED A NEW HOME FOR OUR RACE, I WILL CONFESS MY CRIMES—ALL OF THEM, AND HAPPILY.
AND IF THE PEOPLE LINE THE STREETS TO CHEER ME TO MY DEATH, THEN I WILL CHEER WITH THEM—I WILL LEAD THE CELEBRATIONS—
—BECAUSE I WILL KNOW THAT BEFORE I DIED I WAS ABLE TO DO SOMETHING WORTHWHILE.

WHAT IS THIS? I OPEN MY SPARK AND YOU START TYPING?
...
IF I WERE TO LET YOU JOIN THE LOST LIGHT IT WOULD BE CONDITIONAL.
I WOULD ATTACH A CONDITION.

I COULD LOCK YOU UP INSIDE METROPLEX UNTIL RODIMUS FINDS THE KNIGHTS, AND NO ONE COULD ACCUSE ME OF STEPPING OUTSIDE THE LAW.
SO HERE'S HOW THIS IS GOING TO WORK.
IN EXCHANGE FOR FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, YOU'RE GOING TO STAND IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE—
—IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE YOU'VE WRONGED—

—AND YOU'RE GOING TO SAY THAT.


NOW.
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER. "CO-CAPTAIN" OR NOT, IT'S TIME YOU SHOWED A LITTLE STEEL.
RIGHT! C'MON THEN! CHOP CHOP!
WHO ARE YOU CALLING?
EVEN BY OUR STANDARDS, MAGNUS, THIS IS MACABRE AND INEXPLICABLE AND—AND—SCREWED UP.
WHO AM I CALLING?
"I'M CALLING TEAM RODIMUS."
THE INVESTIGATOR
THE GENIUS*
THE THEORETICIAN
RODIMUS! YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE WHAT JUST HAPPENED!
I OPENED THE DOOR TO MY HAB SUITE AND—
THE MNEMOSURGEON
—YOU FOUND YOUR OWN DEAD BODY INSIDE? 'COS IF NOT, I WIN.
THE SAVANT
*CITATION NEEDED.
ANYWAY, IT'S MAINLY YOU I'M AFTER, CHROMEDOME.
IF THERE ARE STILL SOME MEMORIES IN MY DEAD LOOK-ALIKE, YOU COULD READ THEM AND FIND OUT IF HE'S REALLY ME.
YOU DO REALIZE THAT INTERFACING WITH A CORPSE IS HIGHLY DANGEROUS. I COULD DIE.
"COULD"! THE LUXURY OF "COULD"! I'M ALREADY DEAD!
}SIGH{
I'LL DO IT THIS ONE TIME— BUT DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP.
HALF THE BRAIN'S MISSING.
SLIKT

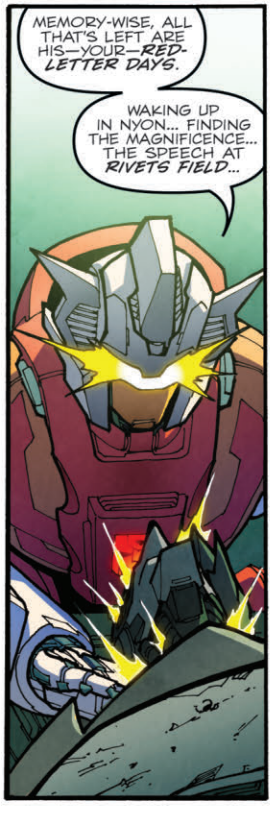
UGH.
DON'T LIKE NEEDLES?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

I DON'T KNOW, YOU AND YOUR GADGETS...
IT'S AN EARLY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM.
AN *EARLY* EARLY WARNING SYSTEM?
UH-HUH. MY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM WAS KICKING IN WAY TOO LATE.

UH-OH!
DID IT JUST GO—?
DON'T WORRY, WE'RE STILL SEVERAL NOTCHES BELOW, "*RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!*"
NAUTICA? C'MERE A MINUTE.

WHAT DO YOU RECKON? CAN THEY TELL US ANYTHING?
THEY LOOK LIKE *SPECTRALIST* SYMBOLS—AND THEY'RE PURELY *DECORATIVE*, I'M AFRAID.
HAVING SAID THAT, THE FUNERARY BOX MIGHT ITSELF BE A CLUE.
IF IT'S SPECTRALIST, IT WOULD'VE BEEN MADE USING MATERIALS FOUND AT THE SCENE OF DEATH.

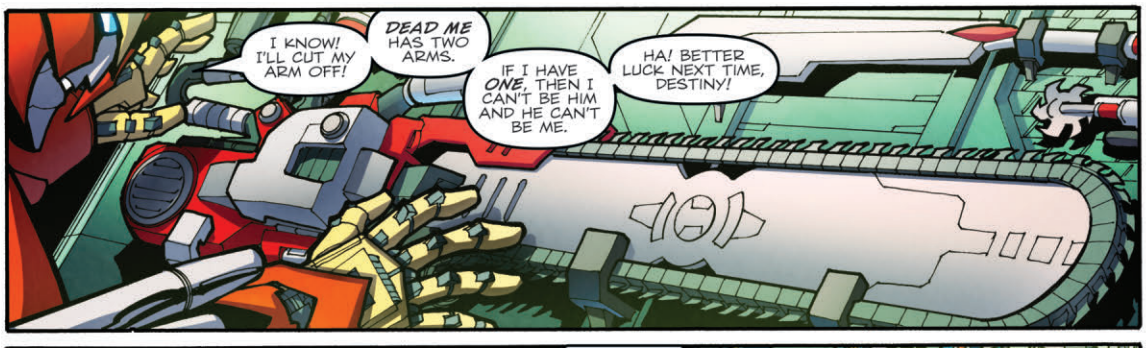
DRIFT WAS A SPECTRALIST, WASN'T HE?
YEAH—IN FACT HE WAS TRYING TO *CONVERT ME* BEFORE HE, UM...
...
HOW'S IT GOING UP THERE, CHROMEDOME?
ANY JOY?


MEMORY-WISE, ALL THAT'S LEFT ARE HIS—YOUR—*RED-LETTER DAYS*.
WAKING UP IN NYON... FINDING THE MAGNIFICENCE... THE SPEECH AT *RIVETS FIELD*...

HE'S YOU, RODIMUS.
HE'S YOUR *FUTURE SELF*—AND NOT JUST BECAUSE OF THE MEMORIES.
HIS *INNERMOST ENERGON*—THE ENERGON YOU WERE BORN WITH—IS *4.2 MILLION YEARS OLD*, GIVE OR TAKE.
IF THIS BODY WAS A *DECOY* OR A *REPLICA* OR A *JOKE*, IT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE OF A MORE RECENT VINTAGE.

IT SEEMS THAT AT SOME POINT IN THE NEAR FUTURE—PRESUMABLY AFTER WE'VE BEEN REUNITED WITH DRIFT—YOU GET KILLED—
UH-OH!
—AND THEN, SOMEHOW, YOU GET... WELL, YOU GET SENT BACK IN TIME.
SORRY.

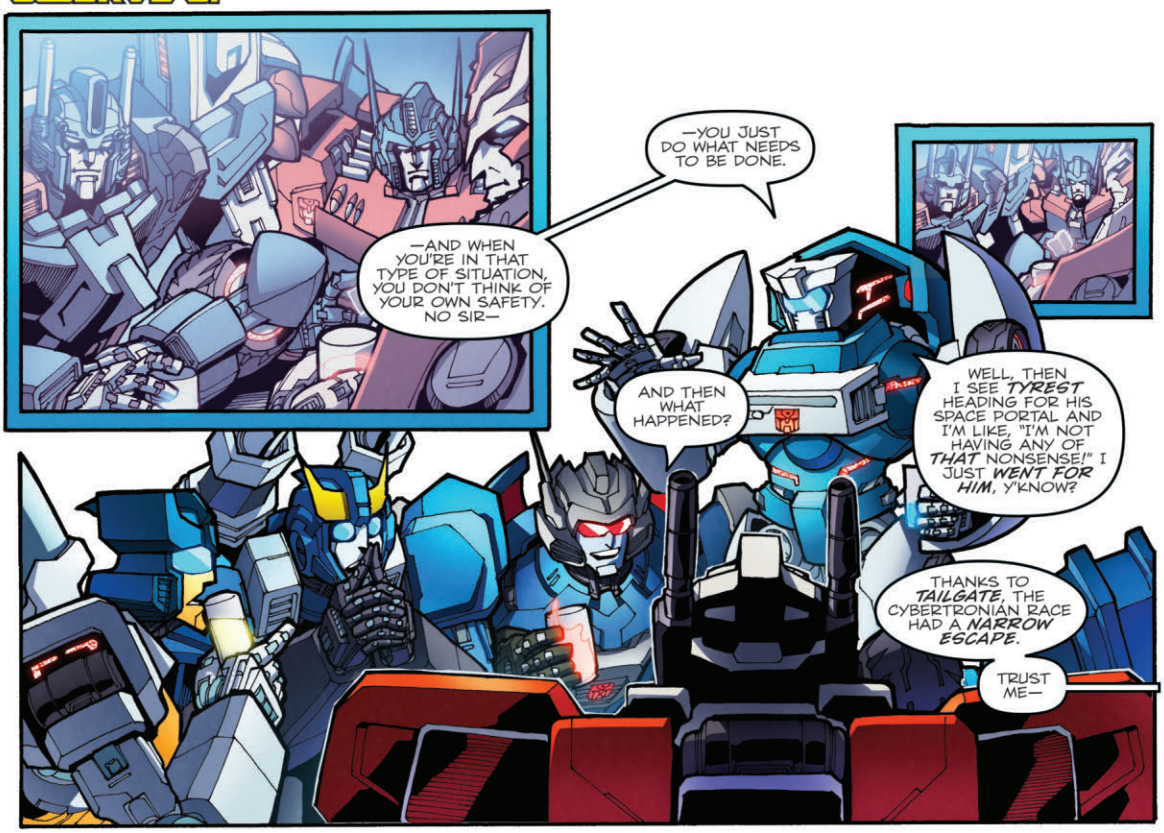
NO, THIS IS GOOD NEWS! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS NOT GET KILLED!
YEE-AH, BUT IF IT WAS THAT SIMPLE WE'D ALL LIVE FOREVER.
WHAT I MEAN IS, IF I AVOID BECOMING THIS VERSION OF ME, THEN THE FUTURE IN WHICH I DIE WON'T COME TO PASS!

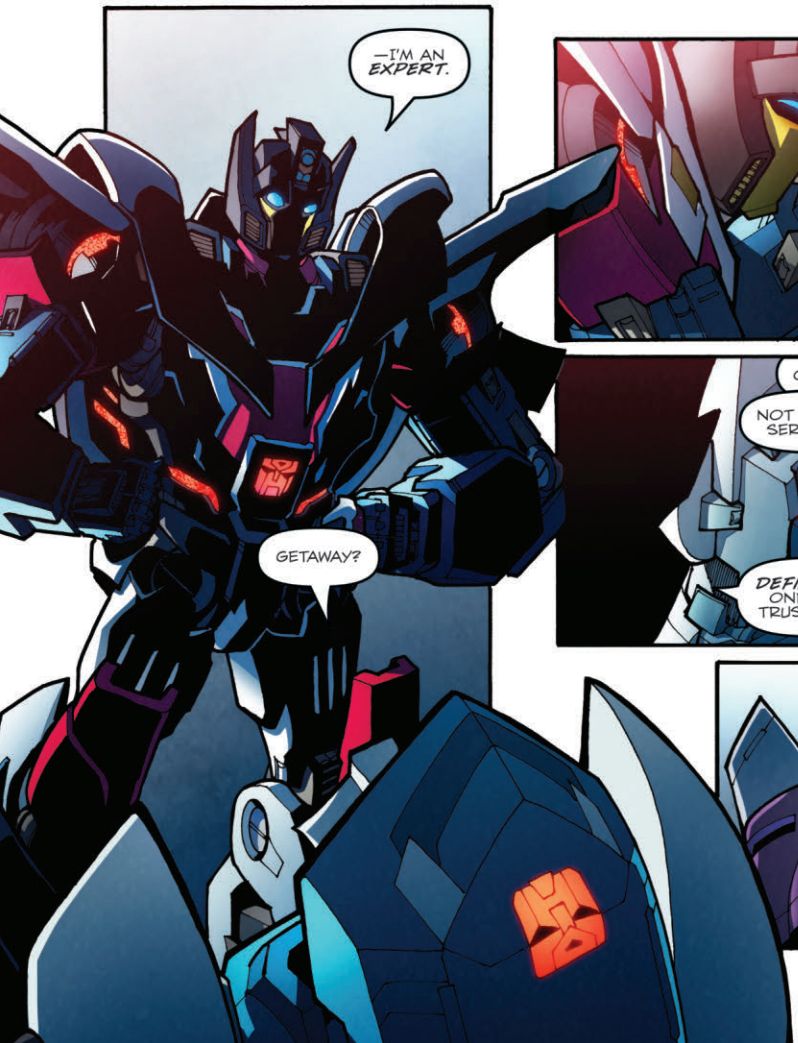

I KNOW! I'LL CUT MY ARM OFF!
DEAD ME HAS TWO ARMS.
IF I HAVE ONE, THEN I CAN'T BE HIM AND HE CAN'T BE ME.
HA! BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME, DESTINY!

BUT... YOU'LL HAVE ONE ARM FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
AT LEAST I'LL HAVE A REST OF MY LIFE!
WHAT IF WE'RE DESTINED TO REATTACH YOUR ARM AFTER YOU DIE AND BEFORE WE PUT YOU IN THE COFFIN...?

OKAY, EVERYONE PROMISE NOT TO DO THAT.
RODIMUS, WAIT!
I DON'T THINK THIS IS THE FUTURE YOU...
...LOOK AT HIS HAND.
THE RESULTS OF THE CRISIS VOTE—THE NUMBERS—THEY'RE NOT THERE...

THEY'RE NOT HERE, EITHER. NOT ANYMORE.
I REMOVED THEM AFTER RATCHET SAID WE LIVED IN A WORLD WHERE—
WHAT?
WHY ARE YOU ALL LOOKING SO SURPRISED?
FIRST NIGHTBEAT'S HAB SUITE, NOW THIS. THE WHOLE SHIP'S DISAPPEARING!
WHICH MEANS I JUST WON ON POINTS.
SO, UM, WHAT'S THE APPROPRIATE REACTION IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS?
RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!


—AND WHEN YOU'RE IN THAT TYPE OF SITUATION, YOU DON'T THINK OF YOUR OWN SAFETY. NO SIR—
—YOU JUST DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.
AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?
WELL, THEN I SEE *TYREST* HEADING FOR HIS SPACE PORTAL AND I'M LIKE, "I'M NOT HAVING ANY OF *THAT* NONSENSE!" I JUST *WENT FOR HIM*, Y'KNOW?
THANKS TO *TAILGATE*, THE CYBERTRONIAN RACE HAD A *NARROW ESCAPE*.
TRUST ME—


—I'M AN *EXPERT*.
GETAWAY?

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE, SCOUT—
(CAN I CALL YOU SCOUT?)
—YOU WERE *AMAZING*. YOU'LL MAKE A PRIME ONE DAY.

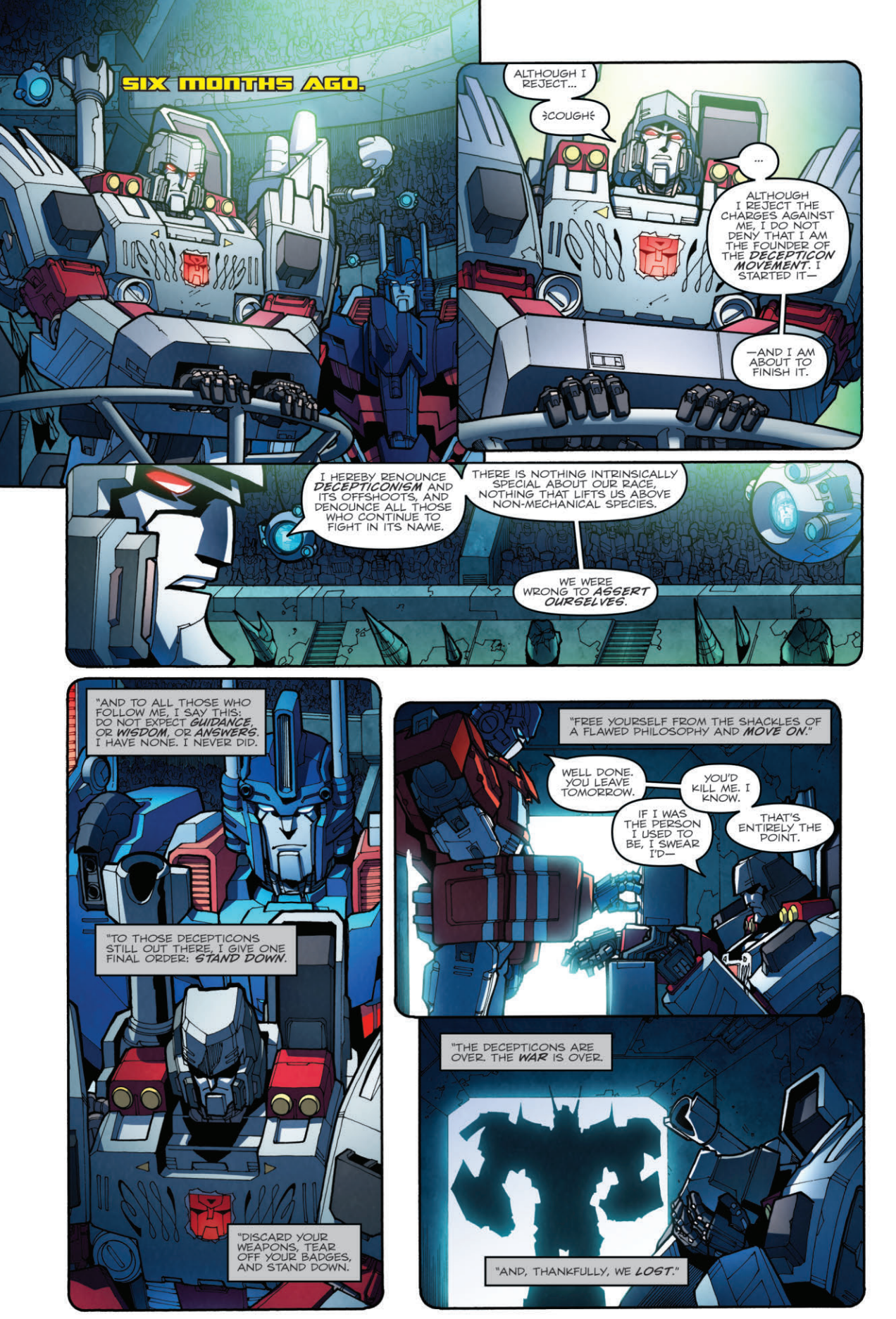
OH, SHUSH.
NOT "SHUSH"! SERIOUSLY!
NO, NO, NO.
MAYBE ONE DAY.
DEFINITELY ONE DAY. TRUST ME—

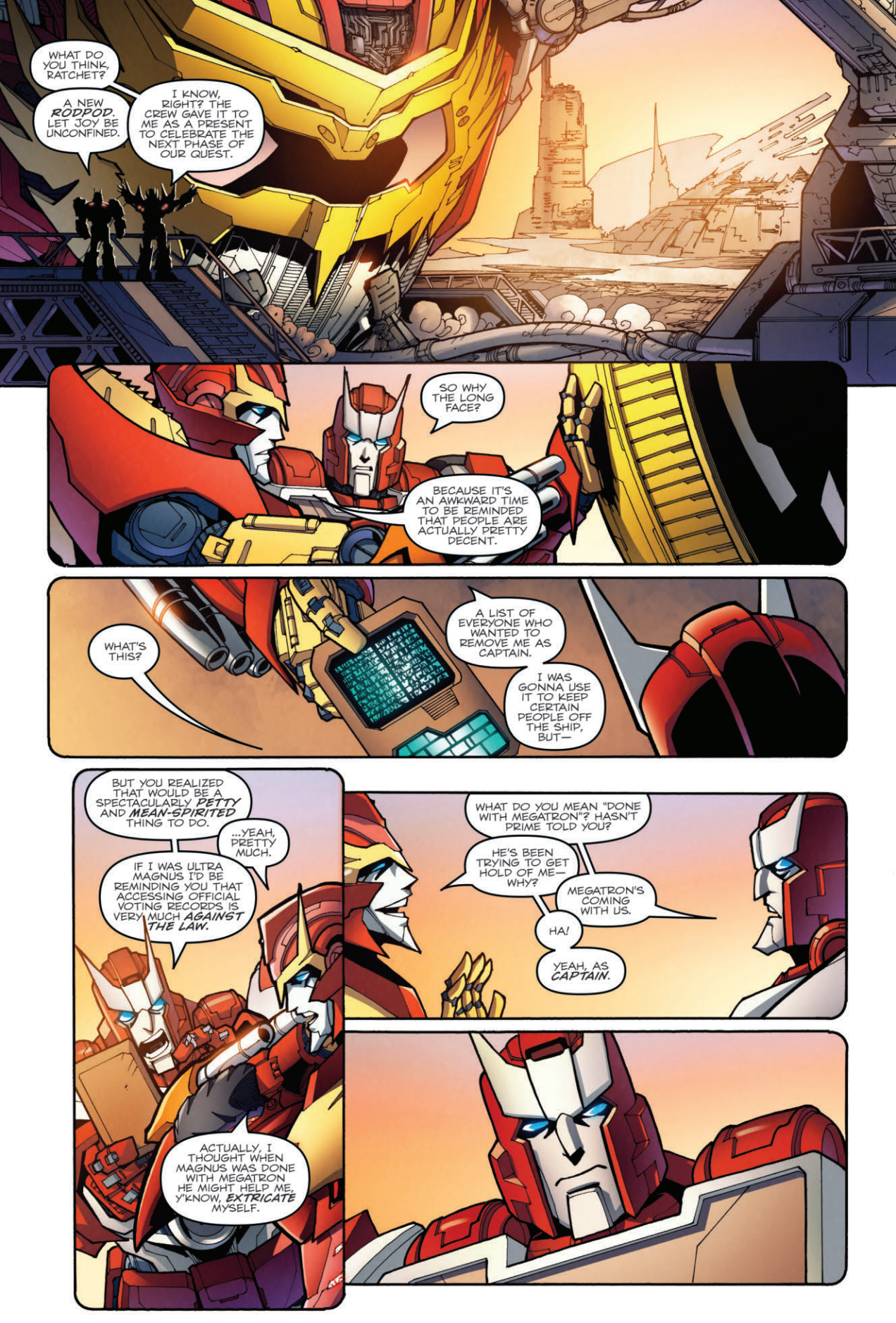
—PEOPLE ARE ONLY JUST STARTING TO APPRECIATE YOU.

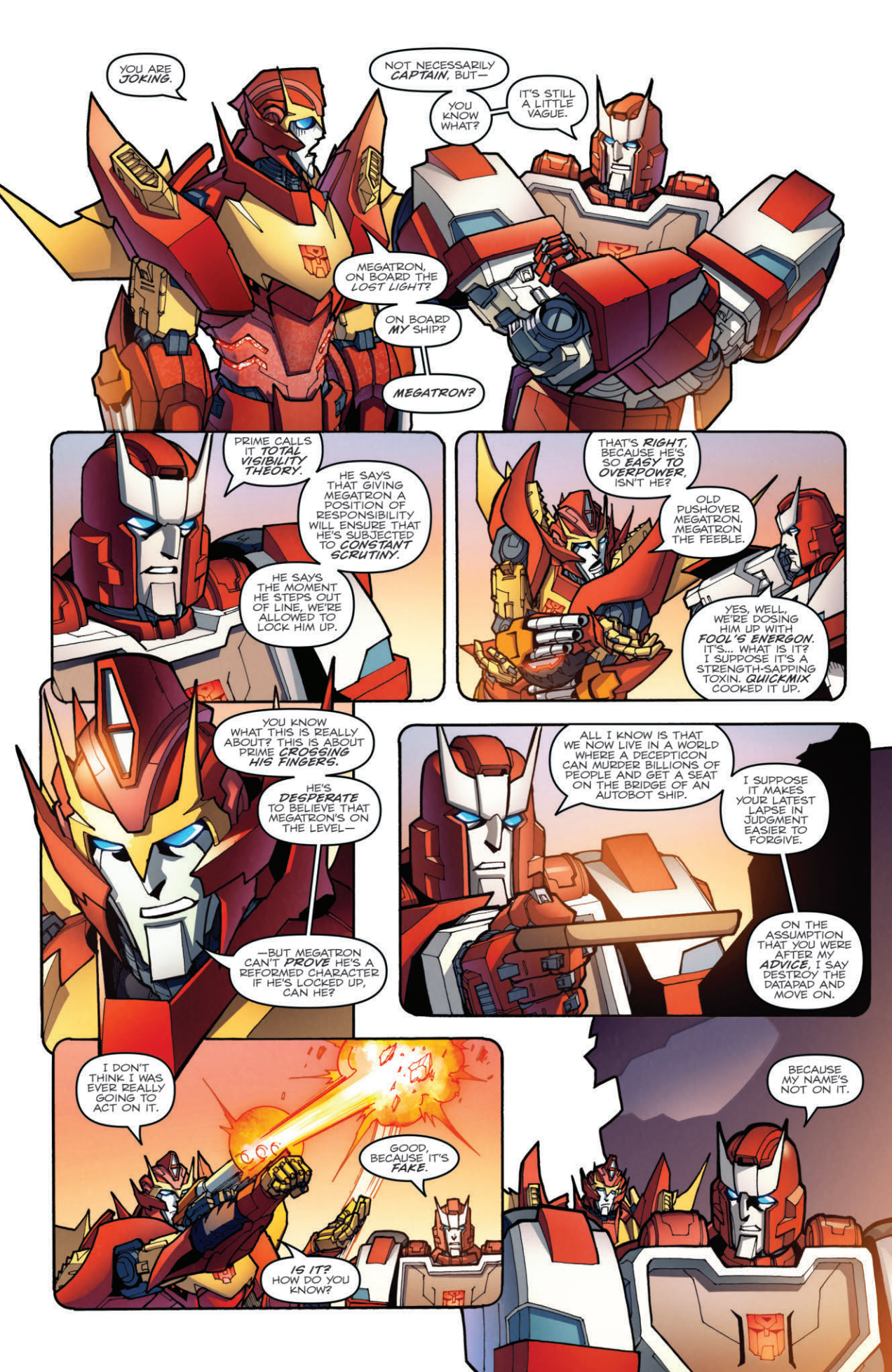
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
ANYTHING. ASK ME ANYTHING.
YOUR ARM USED TO SAY "BOMB DISPOSAL" AND NOW IT DOESN'T.
AW, THAT WAS JUST ME BEING SILLY...
WASTE DISPOSAL
...I TRIED TO REINVENT MYSELF AND THEN THOUGHT BETTER OF IT.
BUT WHY DO THAT?
WHY LIE?
I'M NOT— I DON'T MEAN THAT AGGRESSIVELY, I'M JUST CURIOUS.
I DUNNO, I PROBABLY THOUGHT IT WOULD MAKE PEOPLE RESPECT ME.
WE CAN'T ALL BE CODEBREAKERS OR MARKSMEN OR ESCAPOLOGISTS.
HEY, BEFORE I WAS ANY OF THOSE THINGS I WAS AN M.T.O. I KNOW HOW HARD IT CAN BE TO FIT IN.

LET'S SEE THAT CHIN OF YOURS, SCOUT.
SORRY, SAY THAT AGAIN?
I WOULDN'T NORMALLY DO THIS UNTIL WE'D BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED, BUT—

"BOMP."
AWOOGA AWOOGA
WHAT RULE DID WE JUST BREAK?


SIX MONTHS AGO.
ALTHOUGH I REJECT...
}COUGH{
...
ALTHOUGH I REJECT THE CHARGES AGAINST ME, I DO NOT DENY THAT I AM THE FOUNDER OF THE DECEPTICON MOVEMENT. I STARTED IT—
—AND I AM ABOUT TO FINISH IT.
I HEREBY RENOUNCE DECEPTICONISM AND ITS OFFSHOOTS, AND DENOUNCE ALL THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO FIGHT IN ITS NAME.
THERE IS NOTHING INTRINSICALLY SPECIAL ABOUT OUR RACE, NOTHING THAT LIFTS US ABOVE NON-MECHANICAL SPECIES.
WE WERE WRONG TO ASSERT OURSELVES.
"AND TO ALL THOSE WHO FOLLOW ME, I SAY THIS: DO NOT EXPECT GUIDANCE, OR WISDOM, OR ANSWERS. I HAVE NONE. I NEVER DID.
"TO THOSE DECEPTICONS STILL OUT THERE, I GIVE ONE FINAL ORDER: STAND DOWN.
"DISCARD YOUR WEAPONS, TEAR OFF YOUR BADGES, AND STAND DOWN.
"FREE YOURSELF FROM THE SHACKLES OF A FLAWED PHILOSOPHY AND MOVE ON."
WELL DONE. YOU LEAVE TOMORROW.
YOU'D KILL ME. I KNOW.
IF I WAS THE PERSON I USED TO BE, I SWEAR I'D—
THAT'S ENTIRELY THE POINT.
"THE DECEPTICONS ARE OVER. THE WAR IS OVER.
"AND, THANKFULLY, WE LOST."


WHAT DO YOU THINK, RATCHET?
A NEW RODPOD. LET JOY BE UNCONFINED.
I KNOW, RIGHT? THE CREW GAVE IT TO ME AS A PRESENT TO CELEBRATE THE NEXT PHASE OF OUR QUEST.
SO WHY THE LONG FACE?
BECAUSE IT'S AN AWKWARD TIME TO BE REMINDED THAT PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY PRETTY DECENT.
WHAT'S THIS?
A LIST OF EVERYONE WHO WANTED TO REMOVE ME AS CAPTAIN.
I WAS GONNA USE IT TO KEEP CERTAIN PEOPLE OFF THE SHIP, BUT—
BUT YOU REALIZED THAT WOULD BE A SPECTACULARLY PETTY AND MEAN-SPIRITED THING TO DO.
...YEAH, PRETTY MUCH.
IF I WAS ULTRA MAGNUS I'D BE REMINDING YOU THAT ACCESSING OFFICIAL VOTING RECORDS IS VERY MUCH AGAINST THE LAW.
ACTUALLY, I THOUGHT WHEN MAGNUS WAS DONE WITH MEGATRON HE MIGHT HELP ME, Y'KNOW, EXTRICATE MYSELF.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "DONE WITH MEGATRON"? HASN'T PRIME TOLD YOU?
HE'S BEEN TRYING TO GET HOLD OF ME— WHY?
MEGATRON'S COMING WITH US.
HA!
YEAH, AS CAPTAIN.


YOU ARE JOKING.
NOT NECESSARILY CAPTAIN, BUT—
YOU KNOW WHAT?
IT'S STILL A LITTLE VAGUE.
MEGATRON, ON BOARD THE LOST LIGHT?
ON BOARD MY SHIP?
MEGATRON?
PRIME CALLS IT TOTAL VISIBILITY THEORY.
HE SAYS THAT GIVING MEGATRON A POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY WILL ENSURE THAT HE'S SUBJECTED TO CONSTANT SCRUTINY.
HE SAYS THE MOMENT HE STEPS OUT OF LINE, WE'RE ALLOWED TO LOCK HIM UP.
THAT'S RIGHT, BECAUSE HE'S SO EASY TO OVERPOWER, ISN'T HE?
OLD PUSHOVER MEGATRON. MEGATRON THE FEEBLE.
YES, WELL, WE'RE DOSING HIM UP WITH FOOL'S ENERGON. IT'S... WHAT IS IT? I SUPPOSE IT'S A STRENGTH-SAPPING TOXIN. QUICKMIX COOKED IT UP.
YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS REALLY ABOUT? THIS IS ABOUT PRIME CROSSING HIS FINGERS.
HE'S DESPERATE TO BELIEVE THAT MEGATRON'S ON THE LEVEL—
—BUT MEGATRON CAN'T PROVE HE'S A REFORMED CHARACTER IF HE'S LOCKED UP, CAN HE?
ALL I KNOW IS THAT WE NOW LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE A DECEPTICON CAN MURDER BILLIONS OF PEOPLE AND GET A SEAT ON THE BRIDGE OF AN AUTOBOT SHIP.
I SUPPOSE IT MAKES YOUR LATEST LAPSE IN JUDGMENT EASIER TO FORGIVE.
ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT YOU WERE AFTER MY ADVICE, I SAY DESTROY THE DATAPAD AND MOVE ON.
I DON'T THINK I WAS EVER REALLY GOING TO ACT ON IT.
GOOD, BECAUSE IT'S FAKE.
IS IT? HOW DO YOU KNOW?
BECAUSE MY NAME'S NOT ON IT.

NOW.
THE LOST LIGHT.
EMERGENCY EVACUATION IN PROGRESS.
I REPEAT: THIS IS NOT A DRILL.
THE LOST LIGHT IS DISINTEGRATING.
AWOOGA AWOOGA
PROCEED IN AN ORDERLY FASHION TO SHUTTLE BAY 1 AND AWAIT FURTHER ORDERS.
GOT ANY THEORIES, PERCEPTOR?
ONE OR TWO.
IS THAT ALL? I'VE GOT HUNDREDS.
THEN YOU CLEARLY HAVE A LOT OF ELIMINATING TO DO.
IT SEEMS ANY PROTECTION FROM THE VACUUM OUTSIDE IS ONLY TEMPORARY, AS IF—
KZZAK!

EN ROUTE TO THE SHUTTLE BAY YOU MAY DISCOVER THAT PORTIONS OF THE SHIP ARE MISSING.
YOU MAY EVEN ENCOUNTER *OPEN SPACE*.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! *UNHAND ME!*
SHUT UP AND FOLLOW ME.
OH, AND FOR FUTURE REFERENCE? ONLY *BAD GUYS* SAY, "UNHAND ME."
PICK A SHUTTLE AND *MOVE IT,* PEOPLE!
WE'VE PRACTISED THIS!
SHUTTLE BAY 1.

I'M BLAMING YOU FOR THIS, MEGATRON!
THIS HAS GOT YOU WRITTEN ALL OVER IT!
SORRY. NOT GUILTY.
DID YOU SERIOUSLY JUST SAY THAT TO ME? DID YOU SERIOUSLY—
RODIMUS? LOOK OUTSIDE.
LOOK OUTSIDE NOW.
OUR SHIP—OUR HOME—
"—IS GONE."

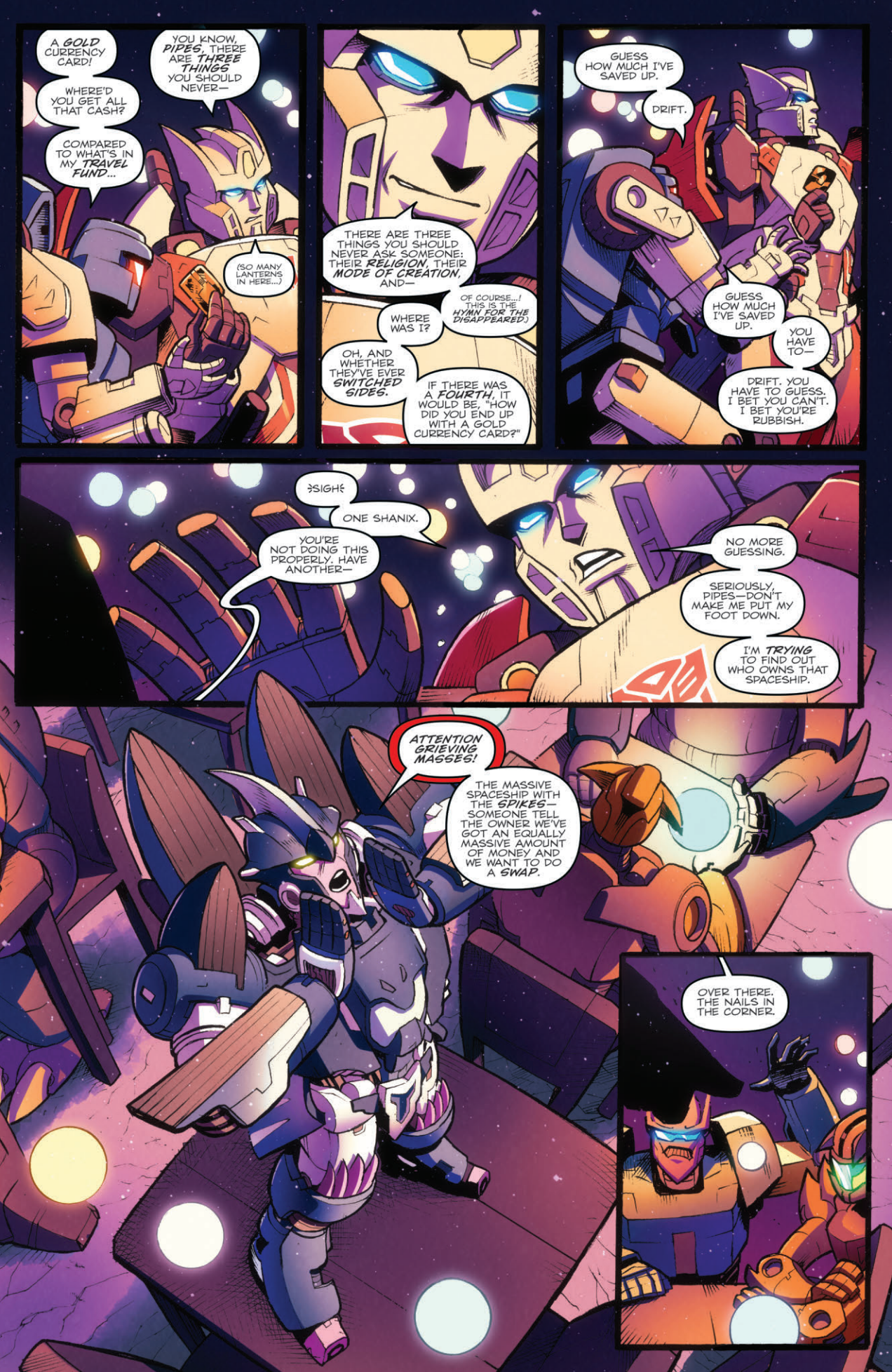
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #30 COVER B

by **NICK ROCHE** Colors by **JOSH BURCHAM**

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #31 COVER A

by **ALEX MILNE** Colors by **JOSH PEREZ**

"YEAH, NO, THIS WAS ABOUT—
"—THIS WOULD'VE BEEN ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO.
"MOST OF THE NAILS* HAD FLOWN HOME TO CYBERTRON AND NEW IACON—IF THAT'S WHAT WE WERE CALLING IT THEN—WAS FILLING UP.
"RODIMUS WAS ABOUT TO ANNOUNCE HIS GALACTIC ROAD TRIP—
*NON-AFFILIATED CYBERTRONIANS
"—AND DRIFT WAS SHOPPING AROUND FOR SOME WHEELS."
THE QUANTUM SPACESHIP PARKED ON THE SOUTH SIDE—THE ONE WITH THE FUEL QUILLS.
I'M LOOKING FOR THE OWNER.
"THE TWO OF US—AND PIPES, BLESS HIM—HAD ENDED UP IN NEW IACON'S NEW RELIGIOUS QUARTER."
WHY'S EVERYONE IGNORING ME, RIPTIDE?
BECAUSE YOU'RE WEARING FOURTEEN SWORDS AND THEY THINK THEY'RE IN TROUBLE.
STRANGE—I'M USING MODAL ENERGY TO ENHANCE THE WARM, COMFORTING TIMBRE OF MY VOICE.
AGAIN: FOURTEEN SWORDS.


A GOLD CURRENCY CARD!
WHERE'D YOU GET ALL THAT CASH?
COMPARED TO WHAT'S IN MY TRAVEL FUND...
YOU KNOW, PIPES, THERE ARE THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER—
(SO MANY LANTERNS IN HERE...)
THERE ARE THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER ASK SOMEONE: THEIR RELIGION, THEIR MODE OF CREATION, AND—
WHERE WAS I?
OF COURSE...! THIS IS THE HYMN FOR THE DISAPPEARED.)
OH, AND WHETHER THEY'VE EVER SWITCHED SIDES.
IF THERE WAS A FOURTH, IT WOULD BE, "HOW DID YOU END UP WITH A GOLD CURRENCY CARD?"
GUESS HOW MUCH I'VE SAVED UP.
DRIFT.
GUESS HOW MUCH I'VE SAVED UP.
YOU HAVE TO—
DRIFT. YOU HAVE TO GUESS. I BET YOU CAN'T. I BET YOU'RE RUBBISH.
SIGH
ONE SHANIX.
YOU'RE NOT DOING THIS PROPERLY. HAVE ANOTHER—
NO MORE GUESSING.
SERIOUSLY, PIPES—DON'T MAKE ME PUT MY FOOT DOWN.
I'M TRYING TO FIND OUT WHO OWNS THAT SPACESHIP.
ATTENTION GRIEVING MASSES!
THE MASSIVE SPACESHIP WITH THE SPIKES—SOMEONE TELL THE OWNER WE'VE GOT AN EQUALLY MASSIVE AMOUNT OF MONEY AND WE WANT TO DO A SWAP.
OVER THERE. THE NAILS IN THE CORNER.

"SO THESE TWO NAILS—TURNED OUT THEY WERE ***CHIROLINGUAL:*** THEY PREFERRED TO COMMUNICATE BY—"

"BY STIMULATING THE ***NERVECIRCUITS*** IN THE FINGERS, WRIST, AND PALM. I KNOW. I SPEAK A LITTLE HAND."

"ME TOO, ***NAUTICA,*** ME TOO—AND IT COST ME. DRIFT, OF COURSE, WAS ***FLUENT.***

< YOUR SHIP. IS IT FASTER THAN LIGHT? >

< OF COURSE. IT'S A HOP SHIP. >

< HOW MANY HOPS ON THE CLOCK? >

< 20, 21. FROM VELA PULSAR BACK HERE. BACK HOME. >

< IN 21 JUMPS? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. >

< IMPROBABLE, MAYBE, BUT TRUE. >

< ANY PREVIOUS OWNERS? >

< DON'T KNOW.>

< YOU DON'T KNOW? >

< WE FOUND IT, EMPTY AND ABANDONED. OURS NOW. >

< IS IT FOR SALE? >

< DEPENDS HOW MUCH YOU'VE GOT. WE JUST TURNED DOWN A BRIEFCASE FULL OF CASH. >

DID I ***MISREAD YOUR FINGERS,*** OR DID YOU JUST SPEND A ***BILLION SHANIX*** ON A SPACESHIP YOU'VE ONLY SEEN FROM THE OUTSIDE?

IT'S THE ONE. I KNOW IT IS.

I CAN FEEL IT IN MY SPARK.

DOES IT HAVE A NAME?

THEY CALL IT THE *U1*. WE CAN DO BETTER.

WE COULD HAVE A COMPETITION!

WE ***COULD...***

WELCOME TO THE FESTIVAL OF LOST LIGHT

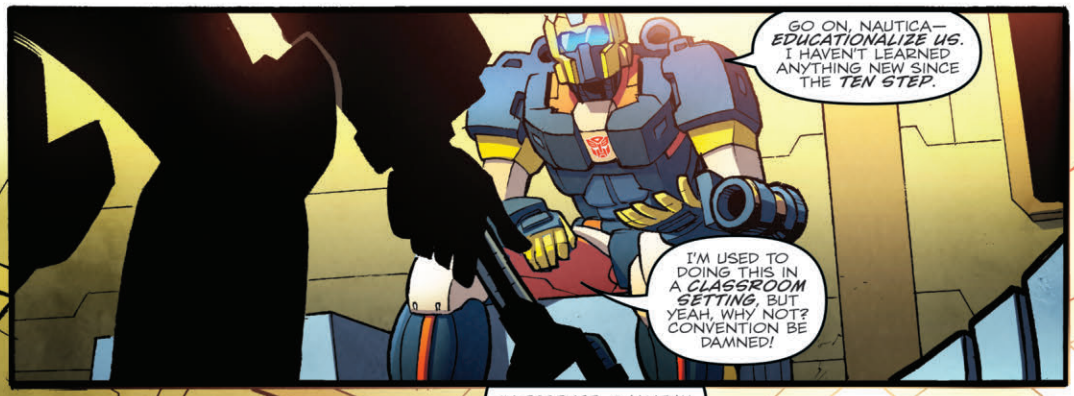
...OR WE COULD WAIT FOR A SIGN.

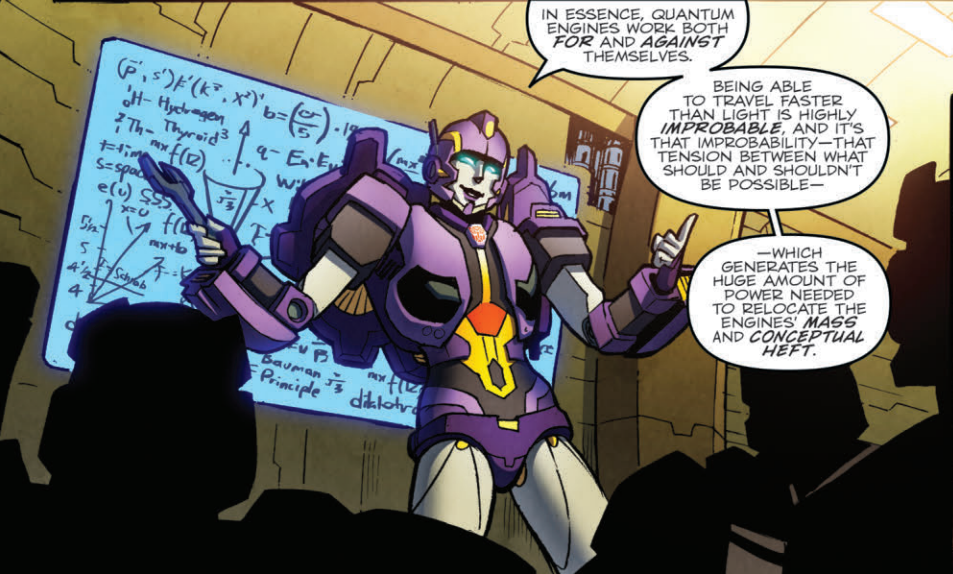
DEEP SPACE, MOMENTS AFTER THE LOST LIGHT DISAPPEARED.
RIPTIDE, PLEASE.
I THINK OUR TIME WOULD BE MORE PROFITABLY SPENT IF, RATHER THAN REMINISCING—
—WE FOCUSED ON THE HERE AND NOW.
YOU AUTOBOTS ARE OBSESSED WITH THE PAST.
AND WE ALL KNOW WHY YOU'RE NOT...
TWENTY PLUS ONE
"YOU AUTOBOTS." DID YOU HEAR THAT, SKIDS? "YOU AUTOBOTS."
SEEN YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR LATELY, MEGS? 'COS THAT'S NOT A RUST SPOT ON YOUR CHEST...
THAT WAS MY FAULT, MEGATRON— I ASKED RIPTIDE WHERE THE LOST LIGHT CAME FROM. IT'S SUCH AN ABNORMAL—
SORRY, IT WAS SUCH AN ABNORMAL SHIP.
ABNORMAL HOW?
THE QUANTUM ENGINES. ADVANCED ISN'T THE WORD...!
I MEAN, THERE'S NO WAY THAT PERCEPTOR, AS BRILLIANT AS HE IS—
—AND DON'T GET ME WRONG, I THINK HE'S BRAINSTORM-LEVEL BRILLIANT—
—THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD'VE USED A REGULAR SET OF QUANTUM ENGINES TO GET US FROM CYBERTRON TO THE GALACTIC RIM IN ONE GO.

YOU PLAYED NO SMALL PART IN THAT, I GATHER.
WELL, I—
THANKS, HOIST, THAT'S— YES.
I APPRECIATE THAT.
...
I'VE LOST MY THREAD NOW. AND MY WRENCH.
COMPLIMENTS MAKE ME CLUMSY.

I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW HARD IT WAS TO EXPLAIN THE SCIENCE UNTIL TAILGATE ASKED ME HOW "QUANTON TECHNOLOGY" WORKED.
I DON'T THINK YOU LEARNED ANYTHING THAT AFTERNOON, DID YOU?
JUST SOME NEW SWEAR WORDS...
WASTE DISPOSAL

ARE YOUR HANDS OKAY, DOC?
YEAH, NO, THEY'RE FINE.
TINGLING...

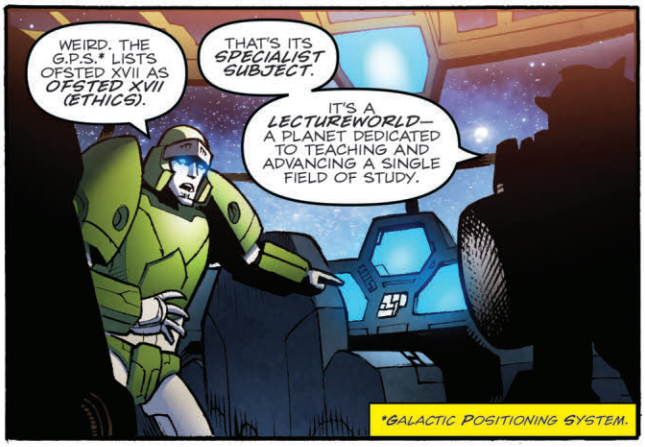

GO ON, NAUTICA— EDUCATIONALIZE US. I HAVEN'T LEARNED ANYTHING NEW SINCE THE TEN STEP.
I'M USED TO DOING THIS IN A CLASSROOM SETTING, BUT YEAH, WHY NOT? CONVENTION BE DAMNED!

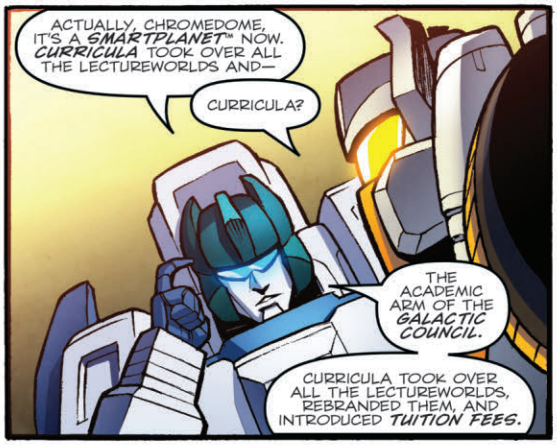

IN ESSENCE, QUANTUM ENGINES WORK BOTH FOR AND AGAINST THEMSELVES.
BEING ABLE TO TRAVEL FASTER THAN LIGHT IS HIGHLY IMPROBABLE, AND IT'S THAT IMPROBABILITY—THAT TENSION BETWEEN WHAT SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE—
—WHICH GENERATES THE HUGE AMOUNT OF POWER NEEDED TO RELOCATE THE ENGINES' MASS AND CONCEPTUAL HEFT.

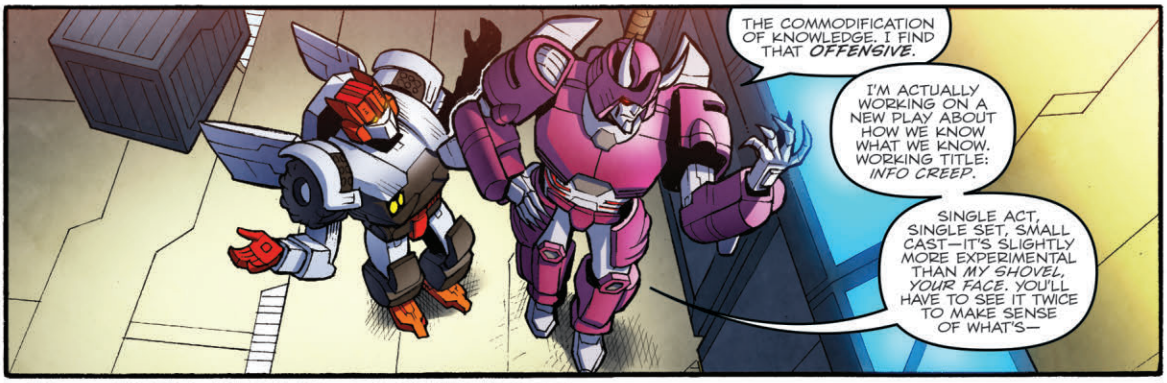
DEFINE "CONCEPTUAL HEFT."
THE HEAVINESS OF THE IDEA.

WHAT? YOU JUST SAID EXACTLY THE SAME THING WITH DIFFERENT WORDS.
AND YOU'VE JUST DEFINED A DEFINITION.
IF I SIT NEXT TO YOU TOO LONG, AM I GOING TO DIE OF SMARTASS POISONING?
NOW STEADY, BECAUSE THIS IS MERELY A SKETCH OF AN OUTLINE OF A GERM OF AN IDEA...
BUT WHAT IF, THE MORE ADVANCED THE QUANTUM ENGINES, THE MORE UNLIKELY THEY ARE TO EXIST... UNTIL, ONE DAY, THEY DON'T.
THAT'S WHAT I THINK HAPPENED TO THE LOST LIGHT: I THINK IT PROVED ITSELF IMPOSSIBLE.
THAT MAKES EVEN LESS SENSE THAN MEGATRON BEING AN AUTOBOT.
I SAID, THAT MAKES—
I HEARD YOU. I'M TRYING TO LISTEN.
STOP ASIDING.
WE MAY NOT HAVE ESTABLISHED THE CAUSE OF THE LOST LIGHT'S DISAPPEARANCE, BUT THE EFFECT IS OBVIOUS:
WE'RE SPREAD ACROSS A DOZEN SHORT-RANGE SHUTTLES (OF WHICH THIS VANITY PROJECT OF A SHIP IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST RIDICULOUS), AND WE'RE FLOUNDERING.
WE NEED TO REGROUP, REFUEL, AND WORK OUT HOW WE CAN FIND THUNDERCLASH WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF FASTER-THAN-LIGHT TRAVEL.
HOLD THAT THOUGHT. INCOMING MESSAGE FROM RODIMUS.
HE'S SAYING THERE'S AN A LEVEL PLANET NEARBY... OFSTED XVII, EDGE OF SECTOR 113. WE'RE TO RENDEZVOUS THERE.
HE'S ASKING WHO'S ON BOARD. "IF MEGATRON WAS HALF THE CO-CAPTAIN HE THINKS HE IS HE'D GET HIS ACT TOGETHER AND—"
SORRY, LOST HIM MID-INSULT.
EVERYONE STAND STILL WHILE I CARRY OUT A HEADCOUNT.
I HOPE THIS PUTS PAID TO THE NOTION THAT I IGNORE EVERYTHING MY "CO-CAPTAIN" SAYS ON THE GROUNDS THAT HE'S LAZY, PETULANT, AND PATHOLOGICALLY ILL-SUITED TO COMMAND...

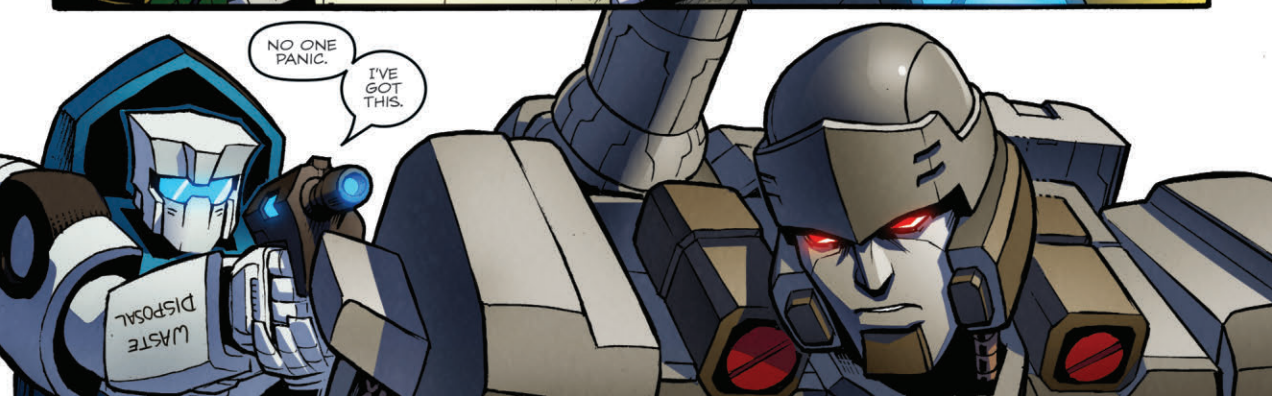
MEGATRON
CROSSCUT
SKIDS
GEARS
BLASTER
GETAWAY
NAUTICA
AMMO
HUFFER
CHROMEDOME
SWERVE
HOIST
NIGHTBEAT
RIPTIDE
TAILGATE
DIPSTICK
CYCLONUS
HOUND
RATCHET
HIGHBROW
"AND HIGHBROW MAKES TWENTY."

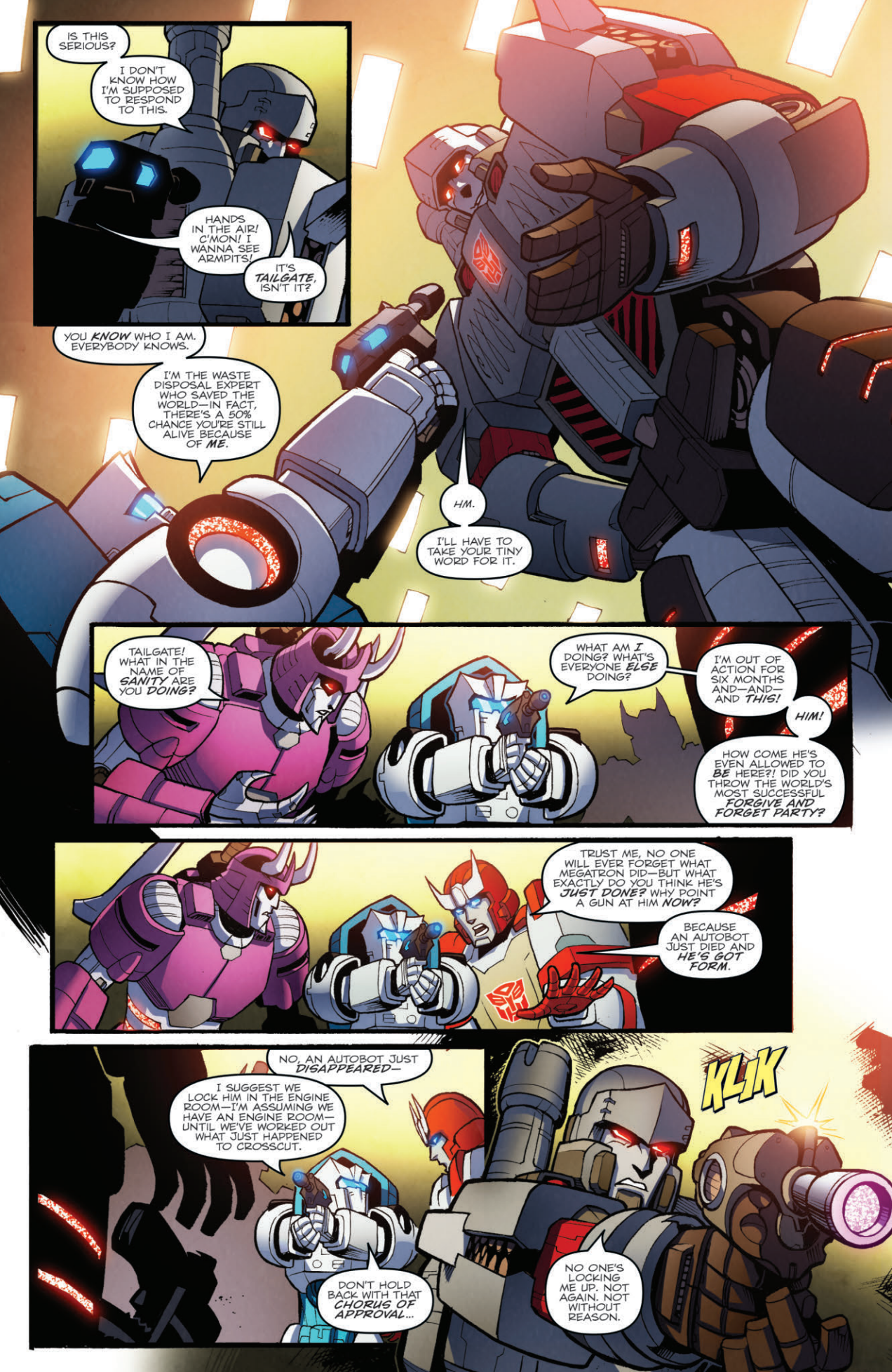

WEIRD. THE G.P.S.* LISTS OFSTED XVII AS OFSTED XVII (ETHICS).
THAT'S ITS SPECIALIST SUBJECT.
IT'S A LECTUREWORLD— A PLANET DEDICATED TO TEACHING AND ADVANCING A SINGLE FIELD OF STUDY.
*GALACTIC POSITIONING SYSTEM.


ACTUALLY, CHROMEDOME, IT'S A SMARTPLANET™ NOW. CURRICULA TOOK OVER ALL THE LECTUREWORLDS AND—
CURRICULA?
THE ACADEMIC ARM OF THE GALACTIC COUNCIL.
CURRICULA TOOK OVER ALL THE LECTUREWORLDS, REBRANDED THEM, AND INTRODUCED TUITION FEES.


THE COMMODIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE. I FIND THAT OFFENSIVE.
I'M ACTUALLY WORKING ON A NEW PLAY ABOUT HOW WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW. WORKING TITLE: INFO CREEP.
SINGLE ACT, SINGLE SET, SMALL CAST—IT'S SLIGHTLY MORE EXPERIMENTAL THAN MY SHOVEL, YOUR FACE. YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE IT TWICE TO MAKE SENSE OF WHAT'S—

CROSSCUT?
WHERE DID HE GO? THE LIGHTS WENT OUT AND—
AND HE WENT WITH THEM! HE'S GONE!


NO ONE PANIC.
I'VE GOT THIS.
WASTE DISPOSAL


IS THIS SERIOUS?
I DON'T KNOW HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO RESPOND TO THIS.
HANDS IN THE AIR! C'MON! I WANNA SEE ARMPITS!
IT'S TAILGATE, ISN'T IT?
YOU KNOW WHO I AM. EVERYBODY KNOWS.
I'M THE WASTE DISPOSAL EXPERT WHO SAVED THE WORLD—IN FACT, THERE'S A 50% CHANCE YOU'RE STILL ALIVE BECAUSE OF ME.
HM.
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOUR TINY WORD FOR IT.
TAILGATE! WHAT IN THE NAME OF SANITY ARE YOU DOING?
WHAT AM I DOING? WHAT'S EVERYONE ELSE DOING?
I'M OUT OF ACTION FOR SIX MONTHS AND—AND—AND THIS!
HIM!
HOW COME HE'S EVEN ALLOWED TO BE HERE?! DID YOU THROW THE WORLD'S MOST SUCCESSFUL FORGIVE AND FORGET PARTY?
TRUST ME, NO ONE WILL EVER FORGET WHAT MEGATRON DID—BUT WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU THINK HE'S JUST DONE? WHY POINT A GUN AT HIM NOW?
BECAUSE AN AUTOBOT JUST DIED AND HE'S GOT FORM.
NO, AN AUTOBOT JUST DISAPPEARED—
I SUGGEST WE LOCK HIM IN THE ENGINE ROOM—I'M ASSUMING WE HAVE AN ENGINE ROOM—UNTIL WE'VE WORKED OUT WHAT JUST HAPPENED TO CROSSCUT.
DON'T HOLD BACK WITH THAT CHORUS OF APPROVAL...
KLIK
NO ONE'S LOCKING ME UP. NOT AGAIN. NOT WITHOUT REASON.

AW, MEGS...
THE ROOM WAS ON YOUR SIDE AND YOU WENT AND DID THAT.
CAN'T SAY I WAS BEGINNING TO TRUST YOU—FACT I PRETTY MUCH HATE YOU—BUT I BET 20 SHANIX YOU'D PRETEND TO BE GOOD FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER MONTH.
A MOMENT OF PAUSE—
—PLEASE—
—BEFORE THIS ESCALATES.
THERE'S A SURPRISE! THE PSEUDO-DECEPTICON PROTECTS THE EX-DECEPTICON.
I SAY WE LOCK 'EM BOTH UP IN THE ENGINE ROOM. DO WE HAVE AN ENGINE ROOM?
LOWER YOUR GUNS, YOU FOOLS. I'M UNARMED.
WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR BACK, THEN—A TIN-OPENER WITH A HILT?
COOL IT, GUYS!
CYCLONUS ISN'T THE ENEMY!
HE'S NOT? OH I'M SORRY, IT MUST'VE BEEN THE OTHER CYCLONUS WHO MURDERED ALL THOSE AUTOBOTS AT KIMIA—BECAUSE IF NOT, THAT MAKES YOU A MONUMENTAL FRIKKIN' HYPOCRITE!
NAUTICA! DON'T MOVE!
HOUND?

LOWER THE GUN, BUSTER. I'M SERIOUS. I'VE GOT A WRENCH AND I'M NOT AFRAID TO USE IT.
AS A WEAPON, I MEAN.
NOT AS AN ACTUAL WRENCH.
I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU—
—I WAS TALKING TO THE CAT!
CHOOM CHOOM
RROOAR!
P-CHOW P-CHOW
AT EASE, EVERYONE.
I'VE GOT HIM. HE'S UNCONSCIOUS.
WHAT'S RAVAGE DOING HERE?
I DON'T KNOW.
HAS HE BEEN HERE THE WHOLE TIME? WAS HE ON THE LOST LIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW.
I KNOW YOU THINK I DO, BUT I DON'T.

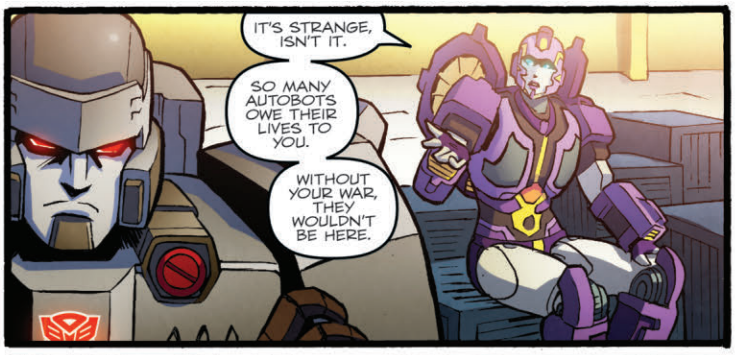
< KEEP STILL, RAVAGE. PLAY DEAD. >
< INCREDIBLE– THEY LISTEN TO YOU. THEY TRUST YOU. >
< SOME OF THEM DO. THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE. >
I KNOW YOU THINK I SHOULD'VE PLAYED THAT DIFFERENTLY, BUT—
OUCH! HEY!
CAREFUL! THAT FINGER SAVED THE WORLD!
DON'T EVER DO THAT TO ME AGAIN. YOU MADE A FOOL OF YOURSELF.
YOU COULD'VE GOT YOURSELF KILLED.
CHIN UP, SCOUT. HE'S JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
PULLING A GUN ON MEGATRON?
I RECKON YOU'VE GOT MORE BACKBONE THAN THE REST OF US PUT TOGETHER.
I GUESS IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY, RATCHET: "NOTHING STOPS A STANDOFF LIKE A STOWAWAY."
WHO SAYS THAT? WHO HAS EVER SAID THAT?
IT'S AN ADAGE. A NEW ONE. A NEW ADAGE. THEY CAN'T ALL BE OLD, CAN THEY?
WHAT?
I'M FIGHTING THE URGE TO DIAGNOSE YOU.
MEGATRON? LOOK AT THE ROOM.
WHAT ABOUT IT?
DOES IT LOOK EMPTIER TO YOU?

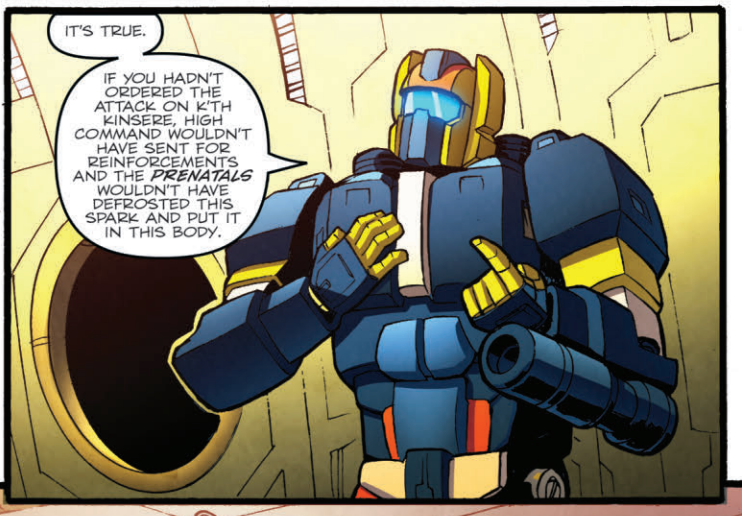
"WE'VE LOST SIX MORE!"

THAT MEANS WE'RE SEVEN DOWN!
HIGHBROW, GEARS, HUFFER...
I DON'T GET IT. WHY TAKE CHROMEDOME? WHY TAKE BLASTER?
WHY TAKE ANY OF THEM? AND WHO'S DOING IT?
WHOEVER IT WAS, IT'S STARTING TO LIKE THE TASTE. FIRST ONE AUTOBOT, THEN SIX.
IT SEEMS SO... SO RANDOM.
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF WHIRL'S THOUGHT PROCESSES, NOTHING IS ENTIRELY RANDOM.
MAYBE WE'RE BEING TAKEN IN A PARTICULAR ORDER, OR—OR THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT CERTAIN PEOPLE—A COMMON DENOMINATOR—THAT MAKES THEM A TARGET.
IF I CAN FIND THE PATTERN I CAN PREDICT WHO'S GOING TO DISAPPEAR NEXT—AND STOP IT HAPPENING.
IF IT HELPS—THE LIGHTS GOING OUT? THE POWER FAILURES?
I DON'T THINK THEY'RE INTENDED TO MASK THE MEANS BY WHICH PEOPLE ARE BEING TAKEN; I THINK THEY'RE A SIDE EFFECT.
I THINK THE LIGHTS ARE GOING OUT FOR THE SAME REASON THE COMMS ARE BREAKING DOWN AND THE SCANNERS ARE PLAYING UP.
YOU'RE PROBABLY STILL MAD AT ME, BUT JUST SO YOU KNOW? I'M ACTUALLY PRETTY SCARED RIGHT NOW.
MY SWORD FEELS ODD.
CYCLONUS? I'M NOT JUST SAYING IT. THIS IS SCARING ME.
DON'T BE SCARED. WE CAN SURVIVE THIS. AFTER ALL—
—WE SURVIVED TYREST.
?

QUESTION FOR THE ROOM!
WHO HERE WAS FORGED, AND WHO WAS CONSTRUCTED COLD?
OOF! PERSONAL! WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
I'M TRYING TO CATEGORIZE US.
IT MAY BE THAT THE... WHATEVER WE WANT TO CALL IT—"THE PHENOMENON"—IS TARGETING ONE OF THE TWO CREATION TYPES.
I WAS CONSTRUCTED COLD.
THE FIRST OF THE FIRST WAVE, ACTUALLY—BACK BEFORE PEOPLE DECIDED THEY HAD ISSUES WITH SPARKS BEING PLACED IN PREFAB BODIES.
I'M THE SAME AS YOU, CONSTRUCTED COLD—BUT I'M SECOND WAVE.
I WAS CREATED AFTER THE SILVER HARVEST—AFTER THEY DISCOVERED THE SPARK RESERVES.
YOU'RE AN M.T.O.*, AREN'T YOU?
YEP! MY FULL NAME IS GETAWAY OF THE CORCAPSIA INCURSION.
*A MADE TO ORDER SOLDIER.
CORCAPSIA? THAT WAS A BATTLE, WASN'T IT?
YEAH—M.T.O.'S DON'T HAVE A BIRTH CITY, AS SUCH.
THEY'RE NAMED AFTER THE MILITARY CAMPAIGN THAT PRECIPITATED THEIR CREATION.
I HAD THIS FRIEND—THIS M.T.O.
LOVELY GUY, BUT HECK OF A CLUNKY NAME.
"SCATTERGUN OF THE FOURTH VORSK OFFENSIVE."

YOU THINK THAT'S BAD? TRY DIPSTICK OF OPERATION: DOOM PATROL.
I WAS CREATED FOLLOWING AN ESCALATION OF TENSION ALONG THE PETREX/ESSERLON BORDER.
SINCE WE'RE SHARING—RIPTIDE OF SIMANZIAN DAWN. I WAS CREATED IN RESPONSE TO THE FORCED FLOOD.


IT'S STRANGE, ISN'T IT.
SO MANY AUTOBOTS OWE THEIR LIVES TO YOU.
WITHOUT YOUR WAR, THEY WOULDN'T BE HERE.


IT'S TRUE.
IF YOU HADN'T ORDERED THE ATTACK ON K'TH KINSERE, HIGH COMMAND WOULDN'T HAVE SENT FOR REINFORCEMENTS AND THE PRENATALS WOULDN'T HAVE DEFROSTED THIS SPARK AND PUT IT IN THIS BODY.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, MEGATRON? FORGED OR CONSTRUCTED COLD?
NO ONE HAS A RIGHT TO KNOW HOW A FELLOW CYBERTRONIAN WAS CREATED.
THERE'S A THIN LINE BETWEEN CATEGORIZATION AND SEGREGATION, AND I NEVER WANT TO SEE IT CROSSED AGAIN.

I KNOW—AND I HAPPEN TO AGREE WITH YOU.
BUT THIS IS IMPORTANT. IT SEEMS THE ONLY PEOPLE BEING TAKEN ARE THOSE WHO WERE FORGED—WHO GREW OUT OF CYBERTRON ITSELF.

SORRY TO TORPEDO YOUR THEORY, NIGHTBEAT, BUT I WAS FORGED—EVEN MY REPLACEMENT HANDS WERE FORGED—AND I'VE NOT BEEN TAKEN.
I'VE ALSO READ EVERYONE'S MED-SPECS AND PERSONAL FILES, AND WITH A COUPLE OF EXCEPTIONS...

"...I KNOW EXACTLY WHO WAS *BORN* AND WHO WAS *BUILT*."

MEGATRON
???

CROSSCUT
FORGED

SKIDS
FORGED

GEARS
CONSTRUCTED COLD (FIRST WAVE)

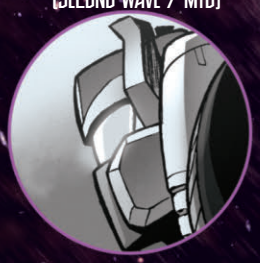
BLASTER
CONSTRUCTED COLD (FIRST WAVE)

GETAWAY
CONSTRUCTED COLD
(SECOND WAVE / MTO)

NAUTICA
FORGED

AMMO
CONSTRUCTED COLD
(SECOND WAVE / MTO)

HUFFER
FORGED



CHROMEDOME
CONSTRUCTED COLD (FIRST WAVE)

SWERVE
FORGED

HOIST
FORGED

NIGHTBEAT
CONSTRUCTED COLD (FIRST WAVE)

RIPTIDE
CONSTRUCTED COLD
(SECOND WAVE / MTO)

TAILGATE
FORGED

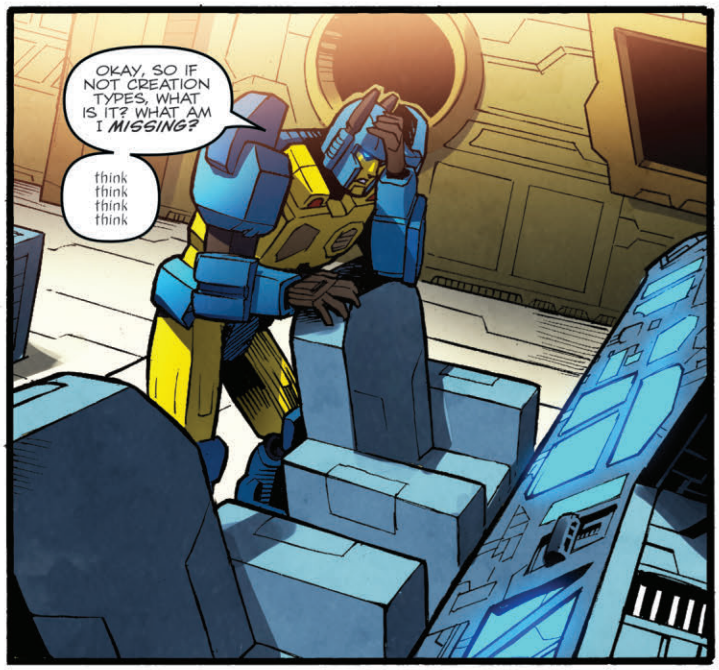
DIPSTICK
CONSTRUCTED COLD
(SECOND WAVE / MTO)

CYCLONUS
FORGED

HOUND
FORGED

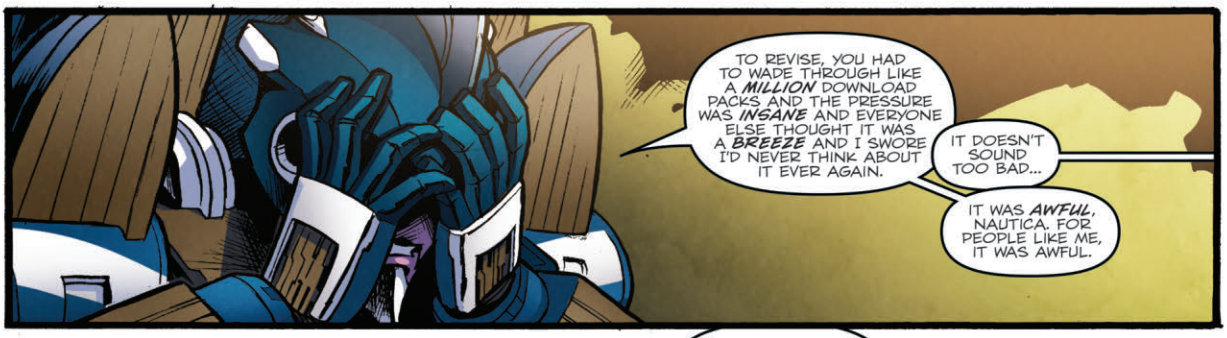
RATCHET
FORGED

HIGHBROW
CONSTRUCTED COLD

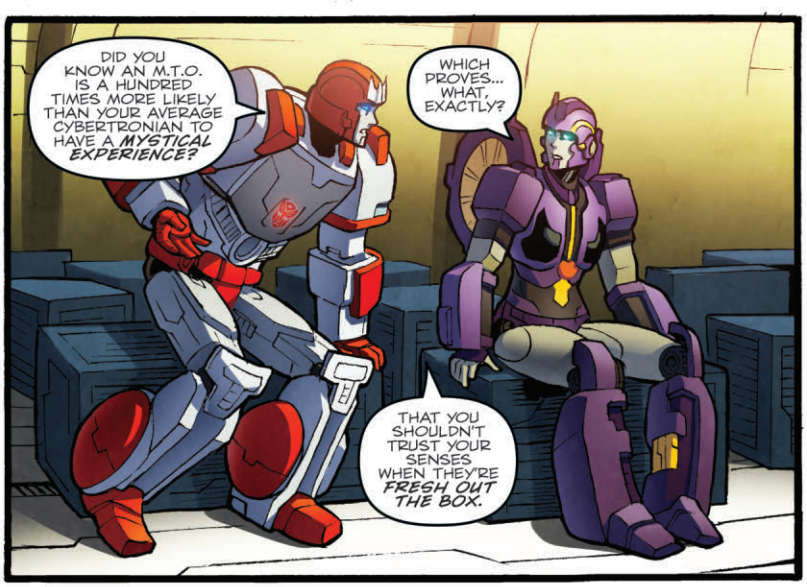

OKAY, SO IF NOT CREATION TYPES, WHAT IS IT? WHAT AM I MISSING?
think think think think

HEY, RIPTIDE— REMEMBER THE TEN-STEP PROGRAM?
TEN? IT WAS DOWN TO EIGHT BY THE TIME I CAME ONLINE.

I DON'T REMEMBER READING ABOUT A TEN-STEP PROGRAM...
DON'T GET TOO EXCITED. IT WAS JUST A SERIES OF STIMULUS TESTS AND LIFE EXAMS THAT M.T.O.'S HAD TO PASS BEFORE THEY COULD BE DECLARED "WORLD-READY."
THE FINAL FEW STEPS FOCUSED ON CULTURAL LITERACY: CYBERTRONIAN PHILOSOPHY, ART, POETRY—WORDS AND FEELINGS AND FLUFF.


TO REVISE, YOU HAD TO WADE THROUGH LIKE A MILLION DOWNLOAD PACKS AND THE PRESSURE WAS INSANE AND EVERYONE ELSE THOUGHT IT WAS A BREEZE AND I SWORE I'D NEVER THINK ABOUT IT EVER AGAIN.
IT DOESN'T SOUND TOO BAD...
IT WAS AWFUL, NAUTICA. FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME, IT WAS AWFUL.

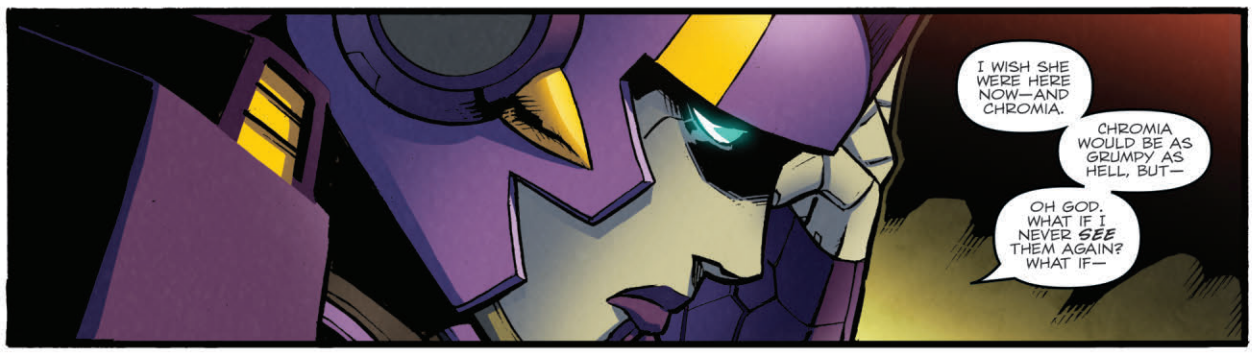
IN THE END, HIGH COMMAND DECIDED THEY WANTED THEIR NEW TROOPS TO FIGHT, NOT STUDY, SO THEY REDUCED THE STEPS FROM TEN TO EIGHT TO THREE.
THREE STEPS, NAUTICA: "FROM THAW TO WAR IN UNDER AN HOUR."
BECAUSE WHO CARES WHETHER OR NOT A WARBORN KNOCKOFF WITH A THREE-MINUTE LIFE EXPECTANCY CAN QUOTE DOMINUS AMBUS OR NOTATE THE GRAND CELESTIAL MELODY?
SO LONG AS HE CAN ASSEMBLE A PATH-BLASTER WITH HIS BRAND-NEW EYES CLOSED, EVERYONE'S HAPPY.
THAT'S SARCASM, BY THE WAY.
I DABBLE.

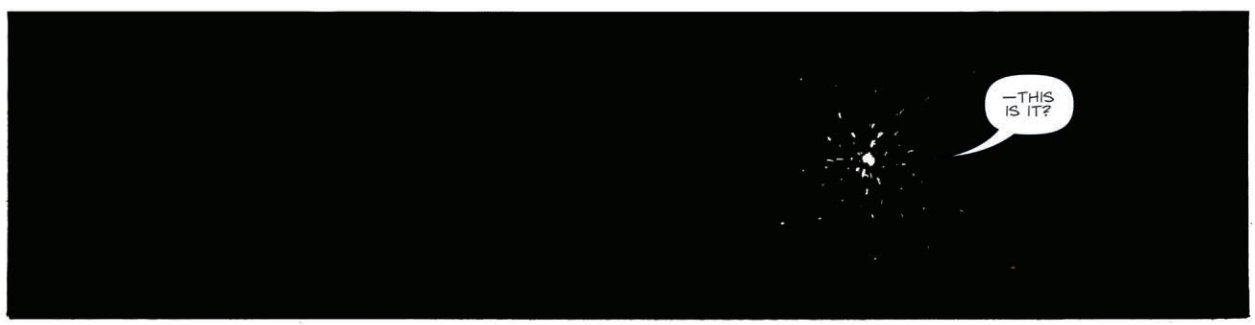

DID YOU KNOW AN M.T.O. IS A HUNDRED TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN YOUR AVERAGE CYBERTRONIAN TO HAVE A MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE?
WHICH PROVES... WHAT, EXACTLY?
THAT YOU SHOULDN'T TRUST YOUR SENSES WHEN THEY'RE FRESH OUT THE BOX.

ALL THE NONSENSE PEOPLE CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN ON THE BATTLEFIELD—THE DEATHLY SHIMMER, THE FACE OF PRIMUS IN A MUSHROOM CLOUD, THE NECROBOT AND HIS PORTABLE APOTHECARY...
ALL OF IT'S SYMPTOMATIC, NEUROLOGICALLY SPEAKING, OF TRYING TO RUN BEFORE YOU CAN WALK.

PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THINGS, YOU KNOW. FAITH ISN'T NEW.
ISN'T IT?
IF WE SURVIVE THIS, LOOK UP INFORMATION CREEP.
IT'S A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONDITION THAT TENDS TO AFFECT—RATCHET WOULD SAY AFFLICT—LONGER-LIVED MECHANICAL RACES.
OVER TIME, INFORMATION HELD CEREBRALLY—BRAIN DATA—CAN BECOME CORRUPTED; AND THAT MAKES IT SUSCEPTIBLE TO UNCONSCIOUS REINTERPRETATION. "FACTS" CAN EVOLVE.

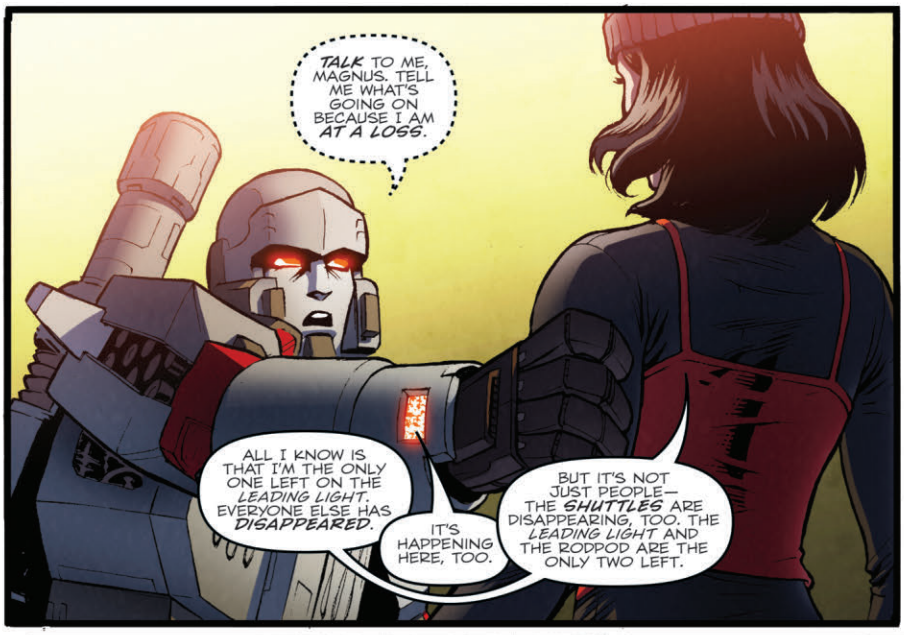
THAT'S WHY IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY, DESPITE APPARENT "FACTS," WHETHER THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON ARE REAL: INFORMATION CREEP.
ON CAMINUS WE CALLED IT BLURRED DATA. WINDBLADE SAYS—AND I LOVE THIS—
—SHE SAYS WITH BLURRED DATA. YOU HAVE TO SQUINT TO SEE IT.

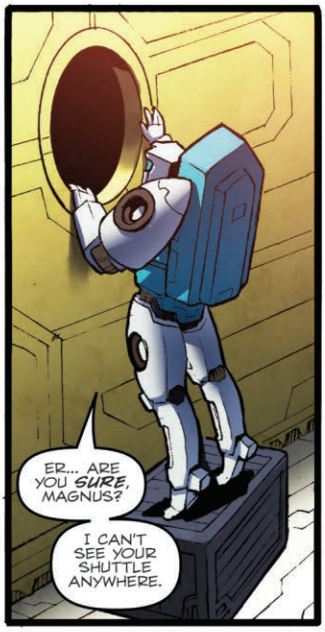

I WISH SHE WERE HERE NOW—AND CHROMIA.
CHROMIA WOULD BE AS GRUMPY AS HELL, BUT—
OH GOD. WHAT IF I NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN? WHAT IF—


—THIS IS IT?

MEGATRON
CROSSCUT
SKIDS
GEARS
BLASTER
GETAWAY
NAUTICA
AMMO
HUFFER
CHROMEDOME
SWERVE
HOIST
NIGHTBEAT
RIPTIDE
TAILGATE
DIPSTICK
CYCLONUS
HOUND
RATCHET
HIGHBROW

CYCLONUS?
STRANGE— HE LEFT HIS GREAT SWORD BEHIND.
CYCLONUS!
WHERE IS HE?! WHERE'S HE GONE?!
SOMEONE TELL TAILGATE TO GET A GRIP.
SORRY, TAILGATE, BUT HYSTERIA IS THE ENEMY OF RATIONAL THOUGHT. NOW IF I CAN JUST—
...
WHY DO I GET THE FEELING I'M BEING STARED AT?
WHY DO YOU ALL LOOK SO TINY?
OH. BEAR WITH ME.
I THINK I NEED TO RESCALE...
I KNOW YOU...
OF COURSE YOU DO—I'M ULTRA MAGNUS. UNLESS YOU'RE REFERRING TO MY HOLOMATTER AVATAR.
YOU'RE A HOLOGRAM?
SOLID LIGHT. MY SHUTTLE'S NEARBY— CLOSE ENOUGH, FINALLY, FOR ME TO REACH YOU BY REMOTE PROJECTION.


TALK TO ME, MAGNUS. TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON BECAUSE I AM AT A LOSS.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT ON THE LEADING LIGHT. EVERYONE ELSE HAS DISAPPEARED.
IT'S HAPPENING HERE, TOO.
BUT IT'S NOT JUST PEOPLE— THE SHUTTLES ARE DISAPPEARING, TOO. THE LEADING LIGHT AND THE RODPOD ARE THE ONLY TWO LEFT.


ER... ARE YOU SURE, MAGNUS?
I CAN'T SEE YOUR SHUTTLE ANYWHERE.

THAT'S ODD, I—
I CAN'T SENSE MY BODY. MY PROPER BODY. I THINK... I THINK I'VE JUST DISAPPEARED.
BUT IF I'VE DISAPPEARED, HOW COME I'M STILL—

—HERE?

OKAY, THAT'S THE FINAL STRAW.
RATCHET! YOU'VE SEEN EVERYONE'S FILES. TAKE EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THE AUTOBOTS WHO BOARDED THIS SHIP AND WRITE IT DOWN.
EVERYTHING, DOC: SPARK TYPE, RELIGION, PAST AFFILIATIONS, CONJUNX ENDURAE, HEALTH SCARES, WHATEVER.
SOMEWHERE IN THERE IS A PATTERN THAT CONNECTS THE ONES WHO HAVE BEEN TAKEN!

BUT—WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THE REST OF US AREN'T GOING TO DISAPPEAR TOO, IN THE END?
NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME— I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE UNTIL I'VE WORKED OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING!

MEGATRON
"Wormholed" body capable of limited mass displacement, sparktype indeterminate

CROSSCUT
Ex-Senator, sparktype vitreous-negative, Nanocon phobia

SKIDS
Outlier (congenital learner), ex-Dip Corps, amnesiac, sparktype vitreous-negative

GEARS
Sparktype isomeric-negative, abnormally small neural cluster

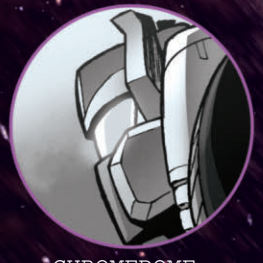
BLASTER
Sparktype isomeric-positive, mild hearing loss (lower frequencies)

GETAWAY
Sparktype isomeric-positive, purported Signs of Affinity

NAUTICA
Possible Outlier, sparktype ferrum-positive

AMMO
Sparktype vitreous-negative, mono-former, early onset *corrodia gravis*

HUFFER
Sparktype ferrum-positive, born again Cyberutopian, subpar change-rate

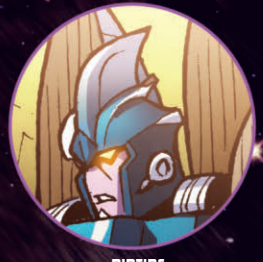


CHROMEDOME
Mnemosurgeon, ex-Institute, low yield spark (vitreous-positive), barren

SWERVE
Sparktype ferrum-positive, practicing Adaptusian, Logorrhea sufferer

HOIST
Sparktype isomeric-negative, evolutionary engineerist, prone to feelings of isolation

NIGHTBEAT
Ex-Dead Universe, implant victim, sparktype isomeric-positive



RIPTIDE
Sparktype vitreous-positive, unreliable Transformation Cog

TAILGATE
Cybercrosis survivor, prone to panic attacks, sparktype ferrum-negative (replenished)

DIPSTICK
Sparktype isomeric-negative, redundant alt mode, prone to coprolalia

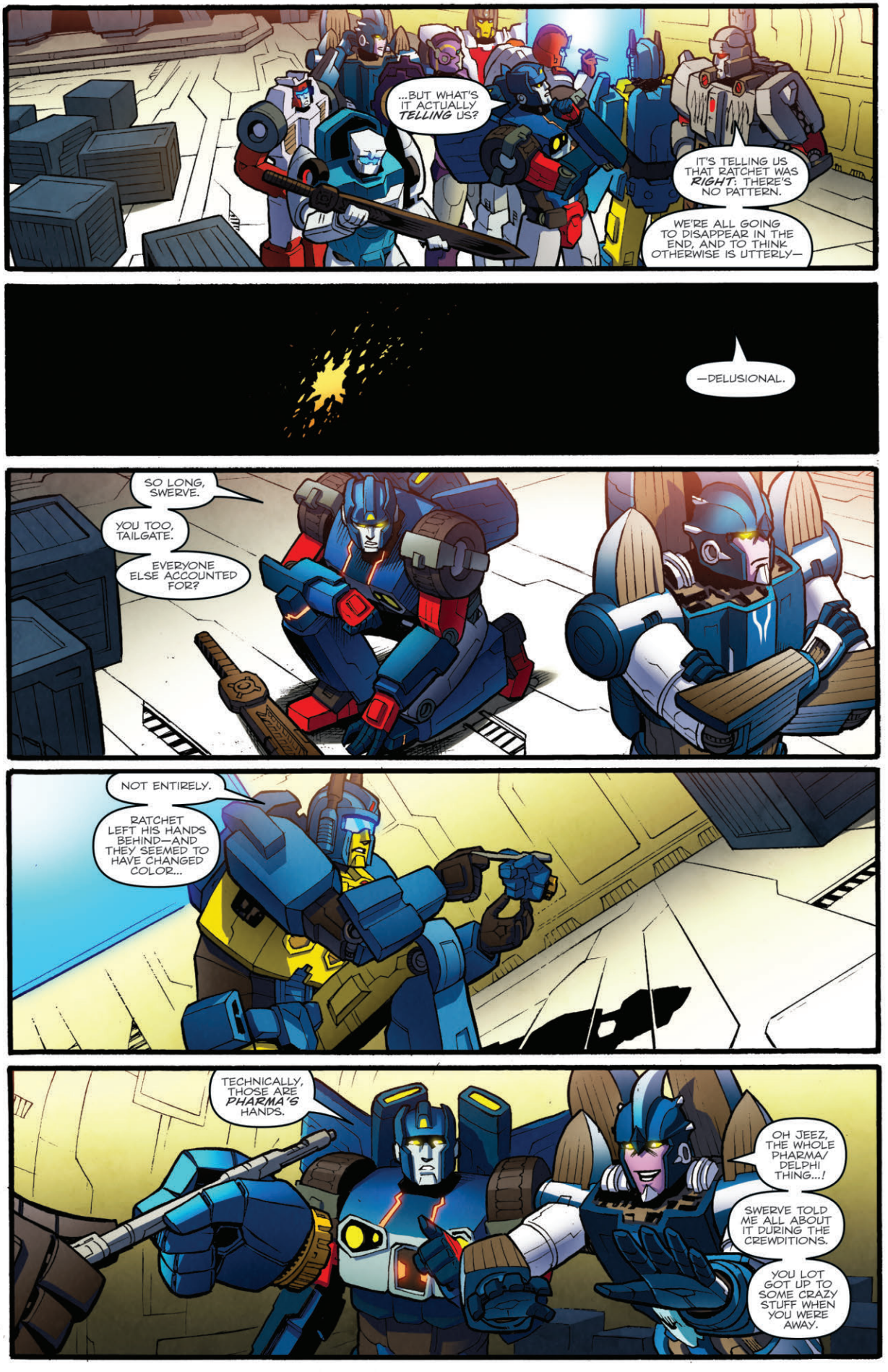
CYCLONUS
Low yield spark (ferrum-negative), Clavis Aurea adherent, ex-Dead Universe

HOUND
Sparktype ferrum-positive, ex-Primal Vanguard

RATCHET
Sparktype isomeric-negative, advanced form fatigue (extremities)

HIGHBROW
Sparktype isomeric-negative, ex-Institute, ex-Malware Brigade

"THAT'S A *LOT* OF INFORMATION..."

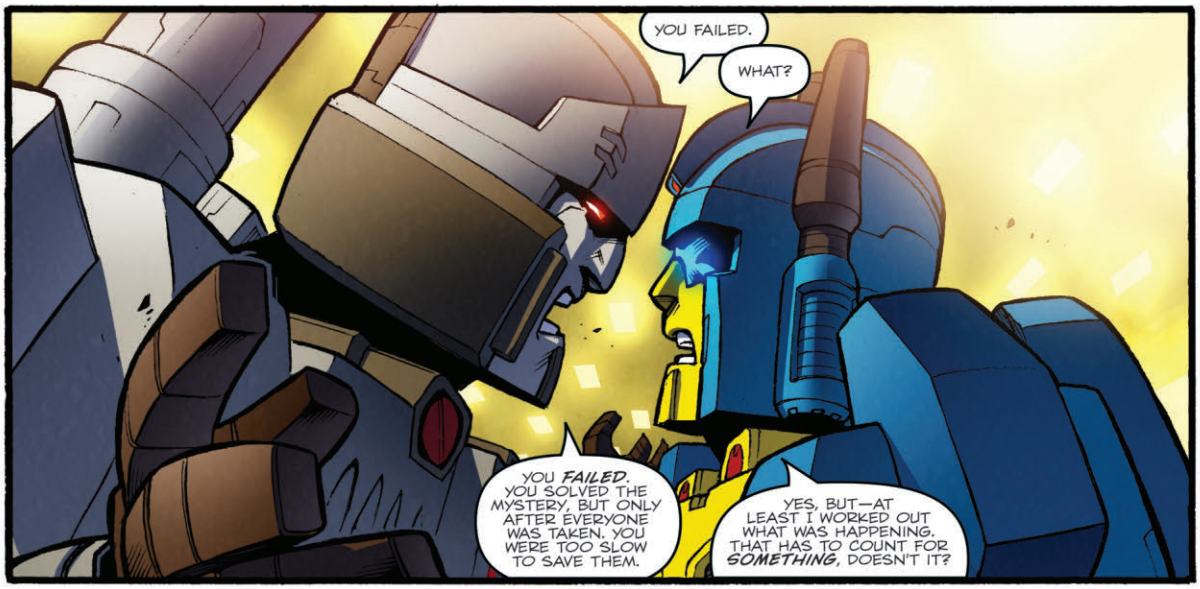

...BUT WHAT'S IT ACTUALLY *TELLING* US?
IT'S TELLING US THAT RATCHET WAS *RIGHT*: THERE'S NO PATTERN.
WE'RE ALL GOING TO DISAPPEAR IN THE END, AND TO THINK OTHERWISE IS UTTERLY—
—DELUSIONAL.
SO LONG, SWERVE.
YOU TOO, TAILGATE.
EVERYONE ELSE ACCOUNTED FOR?
NOT ENTIRELY.
RATCHET LEFT HIS HANDS BEHIND—AND THEY SEEMED TO HAVE CHANGED COLOR...
TECHNICALLY, THOSE ARE *PHARMA'S* HANDS.
OH JEEZ, THE WHOLE PHARMA/ DELPHI THING...!
SWERVE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT IT DURING THE CREWDITIONS.
YOU LOT GOT UP TO SOME CRAZY STUFF WHEN YOU WERE AWAY.

WAIT. WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
I... SAID YOU LOT GOT UP TO SOME CRAZY STUFF WHILE YOU WERE AWAY.
BUT YOU WERE THERE, TOO—RIGHT FROM THE START. YOU WERE THERE WHEN DRIFT BOUGHT THE LOST LIGHT...
I WAS, YES—AND THEN I OFFERED TO GO BACK TO GET A RECEIPT. SOMETHING ABOUT THE TWO NAILS MADE ME TWITCHY.
"I SAW THEM TALKING HAND FROM A DISTANCE AND YEP, SURE ENOUGH, THEY WERE DODGY AS HELL—
"NOT ONLY WERE THEY MORTILUS WORSHIPPERS, THEY WERE HIDING FROM THE CREW OF THE ALCHEMY SEVEN. THEY'D BEEN CAUGHT TRYING TO STEAL A BRACE OF TURBOFOXES.
"NONE OF MY BUSINESS, I THOUGHT—UNTIL THEY STARTING TALKING ABOUT HOW THE SHIP THEY'D JUST SOLD HAD A SPARKEATER IN THE BASEMENT...
"...AND HOW THEY HAD TO GET OFF-PLANET BEFORE DRIFT FOUND OUT.
"I DECIDED TO SAY SOMETHING. AND IN KEEPING WITH THE PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATION...
"I LET MY FISTS DO THE TALKING.
"UNFORTUNATELY, THEY HAD MORE TO SAY THAN I DID.
"THEY BEAT ME UP AND LEFT ME FOR DEAD, AND BY THE TIME I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS TWO DAYS LATER, THE LOST LIGHT HAD LEFT."
WHY ARE YOU SMILING? I WAS LEFT BEHIND!
YOU CERTAINLY WERE! LEFT BEHIND THEN, AND LEFT BEHIND NOW!
HA!
ER—AND THE JOKE IS...?

SKIDS! YOU JOINED THE CREW OF THE LOST LIGHT A FEW HOURS AFTER THEY SET OFF, WHEN THEY SET DOWN FOR REPAIRS.
AM I RIGHT?
AND GETAWAY—RODIMUS FOUND YOU ON LUNA 1.
NAUTICA—YOU MET THE CREW ON HYDROPHENA, HOURS BEFORE THEY JUMPED BACK TO CYBERTRON...

...AND IT WAS ON CYBERTRON THAT THE REST OF US—ME, MEGATRON, RIPTIDE, EVEN RAVAGE—FOUND OUR WAY ON BOARD.
DON'T YOU SEE?
EVERYONE WHO DISAPPEARED TODAY—EVERYONE WE KNOW ABOUT—THEY WERE PART OF THE ORIGINAL LOST LIGHT CREW!
AND I BET YOU—I BET YOU ANYTHING—THAT NONE OF US ARE AT RISK.
NO MORE DISAPPEARANCES!

MYSTERY SOLVED!
WELL DONE.
THANK YOU.
WANT TO SAY IT AGAIN AND MEAN IT?


YOU FAILED.
WHAT?
YOU FAILED. YOU SOLVED THE MYSTERY, BUT ONLY AFTER EVERYONE WAS TAKEN. YOU WERE TOO SLOW TO SAVE THEM.
YES, BUT—AT LEAST I WORKED OUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING. THAT HAS TO COUNT FOR SOMETHING, DOESN'T IT?

DOESN'T IT?

MEGATRON? WE'RE HERE.
OFSTED XVII. WE'RE APPROACHING ORBIT.
AND YET YOU SOUND TROUBLED. WHAT IS IT, NAUTICA? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

WE'RE NOT THE FIRST TO ARRIVE.

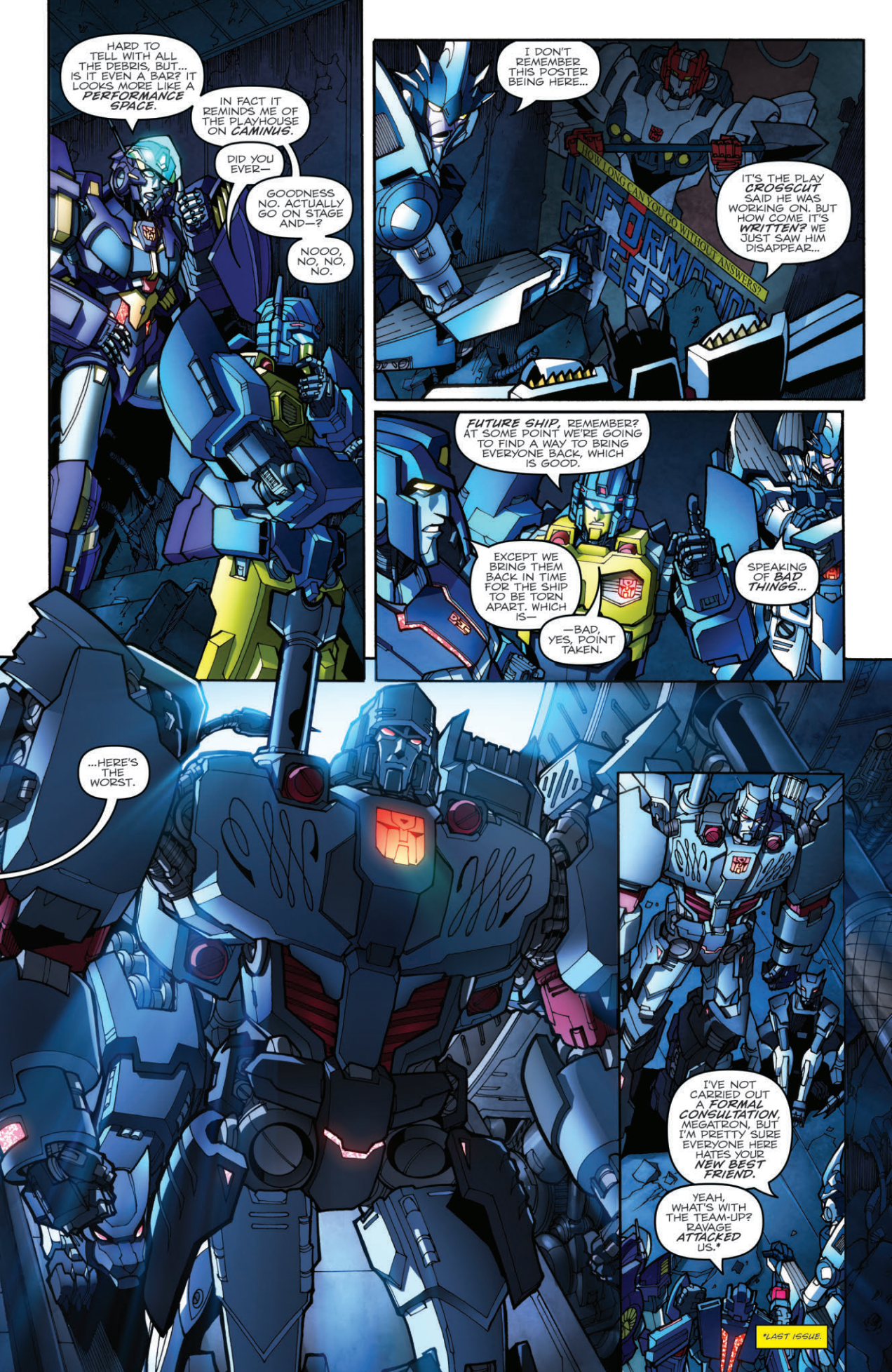
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #32 COVER A

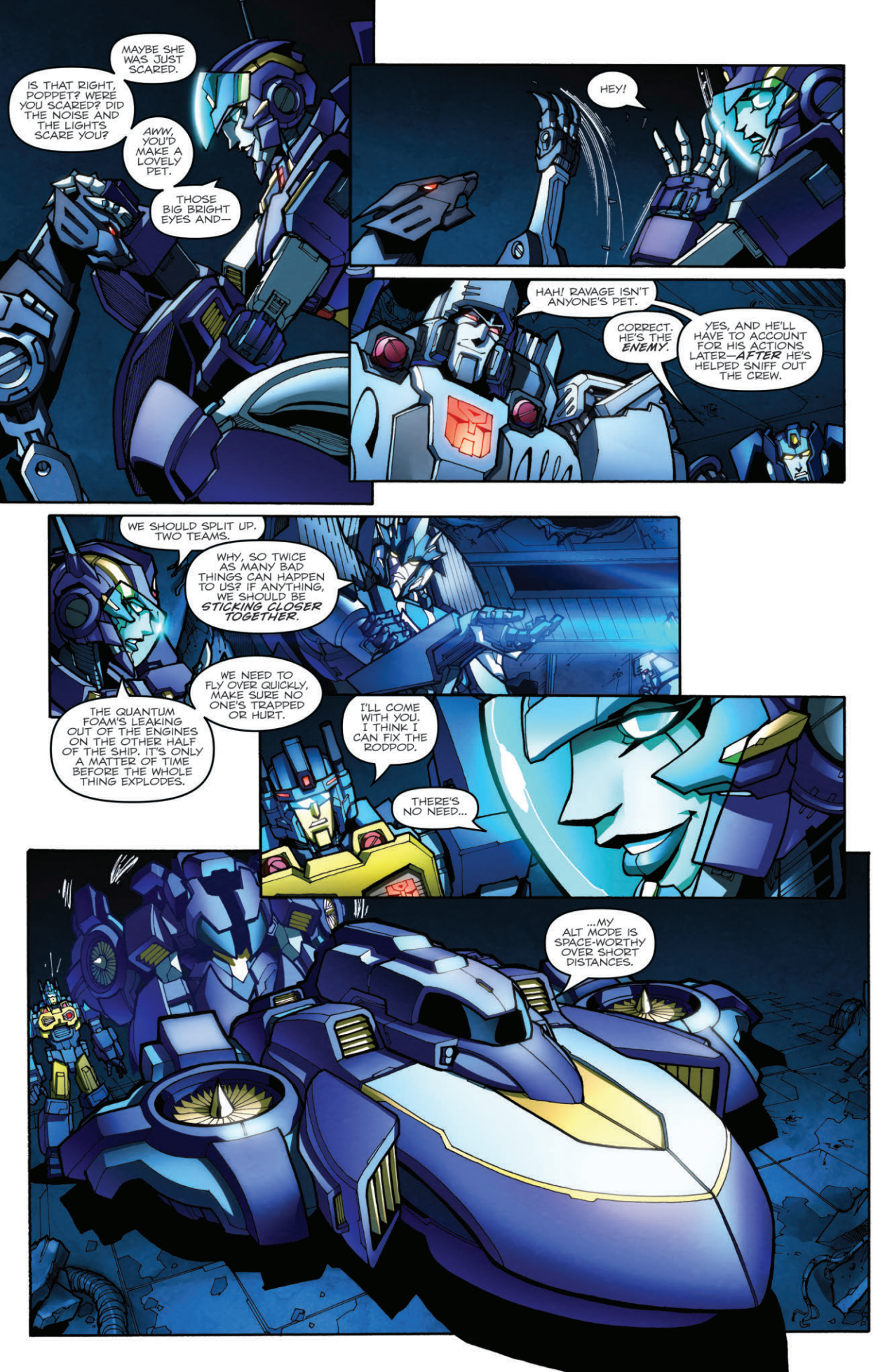
by **ALEX MILNE** Colors by **JOSH PEREZ**

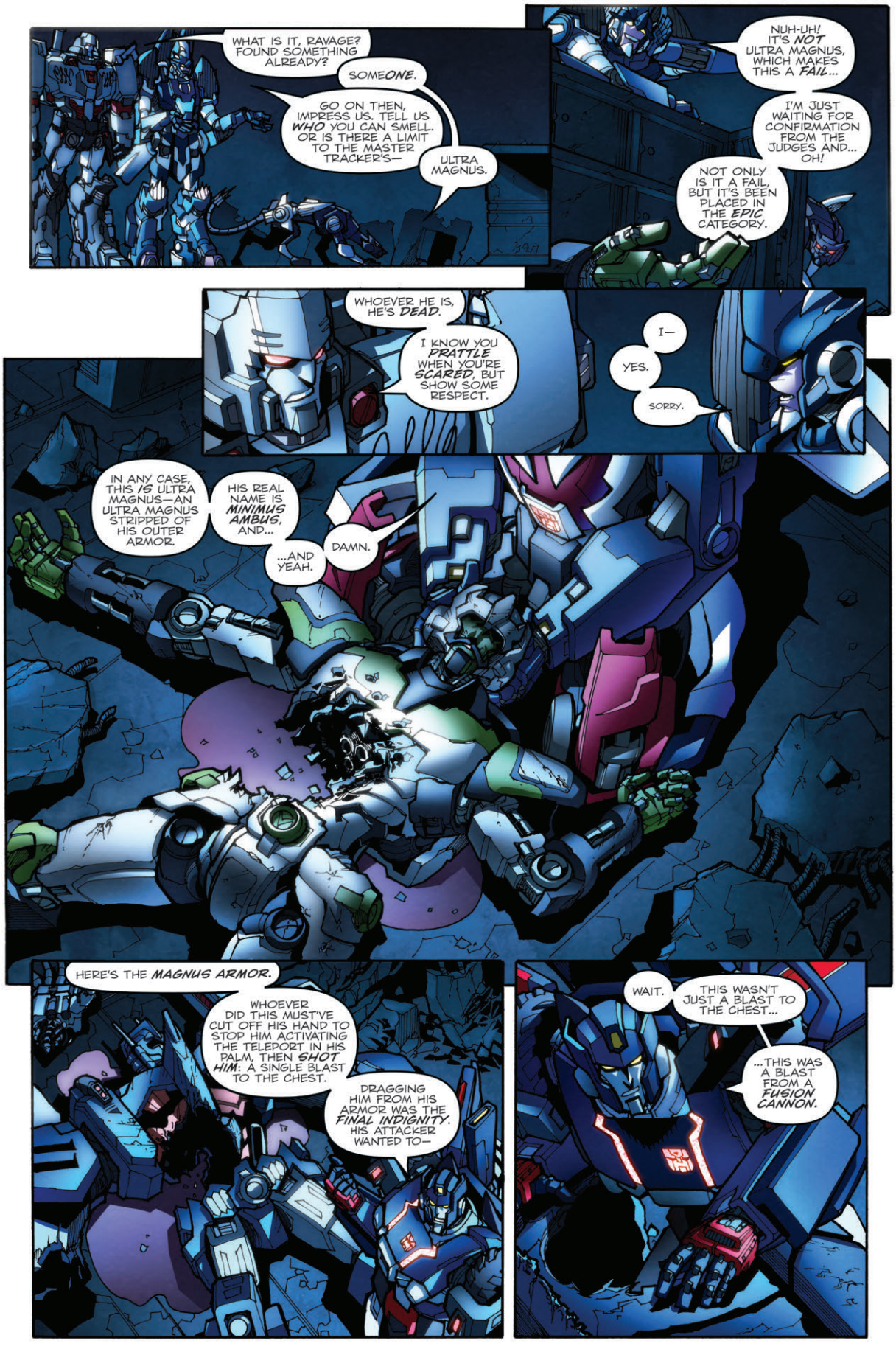
IT'S *US*.
IT'S THE *LOST LIGHT*. I'M ***TELLING*** YOU!
slaughterhouse

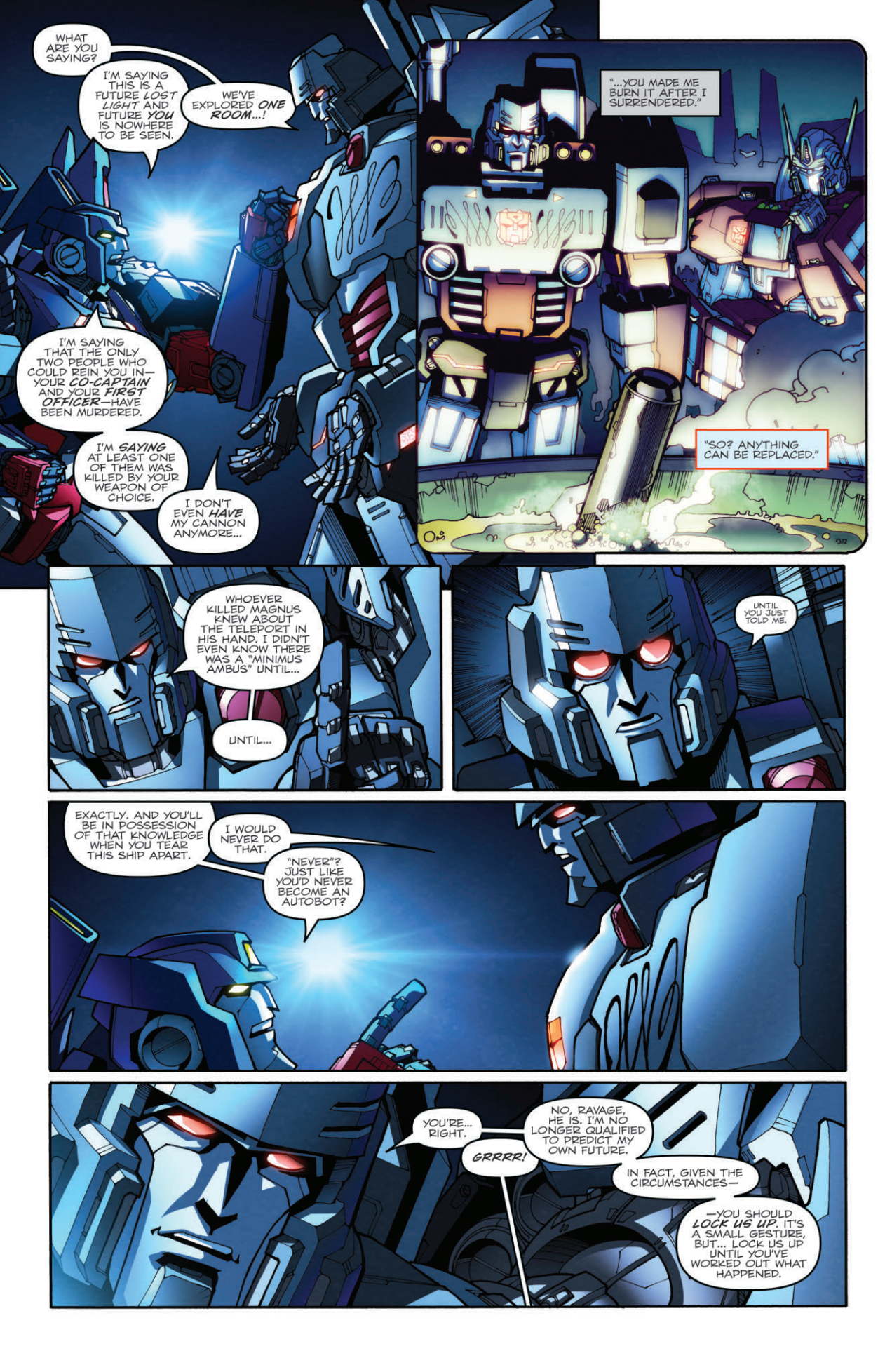
OKAY SO IT'S BEEN RIPPED APART, BUT—
—THAT'S OUR SHIP!
ER—THE SHIP WE JUST SAW DISAPPEAR...
TWO WORDS: PARADOX.
RIPTIDE'S RIGHT, EVEN IF HIS SPELLING ISN'T.
BANKING IT.
YOU THINK THAT'S THE LOST LIGHT FROM THE FUTURE?
I THINK FUTURE RODIMUS—COFFIN RODIMUS—MUST'VE HAILED FROM A FUTURE LOST LIGHT...
...AND THIS IS IT.
DID YOU DO THAT ON PURPOSE?
NO! WHY WOULD I DO THAT ON PURPOSE?
BECAUSE YOU STRIKE ME AS ONE OF THOSE "DON'T PUSH THE BUTTON" TYPES.
"DON'T PUSH THE BUTTON"/ "WHY NOT?"/ (PRESSES BUTTON)/ BOOM!
...RIDICULOUS.
UP AHEAD—THE FRONT SECTION OF THE SHIP IS EXPOSED, BUT THE VACUUM SHIELDS APPEAR TO BE HOLDING.
THEY'LL RESEAL IF WE BREAK THROUGH.
SO?
SO LAND.
WHERE?
"—AND SET US DOWN FOR REPAIRS."
HEY, THIS IS SWERVE'S!

WHAT ARE THOSE THREADS?
OVER THERE— LIKE A WEB. THE RED STUFF.
THAT'S QUANTUM FOAM... AND IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE EXPOSED TO NAKED SPACE. I THINK IT'S MUTATED.
BEST NOT FLY TOO CLOSE. I SUSPECT THE MEREST GRAZE WOULD—
I DON'T CARE. JUST PICK A LARGE ENOUGH ROOM...
ARE YOU SURE?
IT'S BEEN TRASHED.
MUST'VE BEEN A GOOD NIGHT.


HARD TO TELL WITH ALL THE DEBRIS, BUT... IS IT EVEN A BAR? IT LOOKS MORE LIKE A PERFORMANCE SPACE.
IN FACT IT REMINDS ME OF THE PLAYHOUSE ON CAMINUS.
DID YOU EVER—
GOODNESS NO. ACTUALLY GO ON STAGE AND—?
NOOO, NO, NO, NO.
I DON'T REMEMBER THIS POSTER BEING HERE...
HOW LONG CAN YOU GO WITHOUT ANSWERS?
IT'S THE PLAY CROSSCUT SAID HE WAS WORKING ON. BUT HOW COME IT'S WRITTEN? WE JUST SAW HIM DISAPPEAR...
FUTURE SHIP, REMEMBER? AT SOME POINT WE'RE GOING TO FIND A WAY TO BRING EVERYONE BACK, WHICH IS GOOD.
EXCEPT WE BRING THEM BACK IN TIME FOR THE SHIP TO BE TORN APART. WHICH IS—
—BAD, YES, POINT TAKEN.
SPEAKING OF BAD THINGS...
...HERE'S THE WORST.
I'VE NOT CARRIED OUT A FORMAL CONSULTATION, MEGATRON, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE EVERYONE HERE HATES YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND.
YEAH, WHAT'S WITH THE TEAM-UP? RAVAGE ATTACKED US.*
*LAST ISSUE.


MAYBE SHE WAS JUST SCARED.
IS THAT RIGHT, POPPET? WERE YOU SCARED? DID THE NOISE AND THE LIGHTS SCARE YOU?
AWW, YOU'D MAKE A LOVELY PET.
THOSE BIG BRIGHT EYES AND—
HEY!
HAH! RAVAGE ISN'T ANYONE'S PET.
CORRECT. HE'S THE ENEMY.
YES, AND HE'LL HAVE TO ACCOUNT FOR HIS ACTIONS LATER—AFTER HE'S HELPED SNIFF OUT THE CREW.
WE SHOULD SPLIT UP. TWO TEAMS.
WHY, SO TWICE AS MANY BAD THINGS CAN HAPPEN TO US? IF ANYTHING, WE SHOULD BE STICKING CLOSER TOGETHER.
WE NEED TO FLY OVER QUICKLY, MAKE SURE NO ONE'S TRAPPED OR HURT.
THE QUANTUM FOAM'S LEAKING OUT OF THE ENGINES ON THE OTHER HALF OF THE SHIP. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE WHOLE THING EXPLODES.
I'LL COME WITH YOU. I THINK I CAN FIX THE RODPOD.
THERE'S NO NEED...
...MY ALT MODE IS SPACE-WORTHY OVER SHORT DISTANCES.


WHAT IS IT, RAVAGE? FOUND SOMETHING ALREADY?
SOMEONE.
GO ON THEN, IMPRESS US. TELL US WHO YOU CAN SMELL. OR IS THERE A LIMIT TO THE MASTER TRACKER'S—
ULTRA MAGNUS.
NUH-UH! IT'S NOT ULTRA MAGNUS, WHICH MAKES THIS A FAIL...
I'M JUST WAITING FOR CONFIRMATION FROM THE JUDGES AND... OH!
NOT ONLY IS IT A FAIL, BUT IT'S BEEN PLACED IN THE EPIC CATEGORY.
WHOEVER HE IS, HE'S DEAD.
I KNOW YOU PRATTLE WHEN YOU'RE SCARED, BUT SHOW SOME RESPECT.
I—
YES.
SORRY.
IN ANY CASE, THIS IS ULTRA MAGNUS—AN ULTRA MAGNUS STRIPPED OF HIS OUTER ARMOR.
HIS REAL NAME IS MINIMUS AMBUS, AND...
...AND YEAH.
DAMN.
HERE'S THE MAGNUS ARMOR.
WHOEVER DID THIS MUST'VE CUT OFF HIS HAND TO STOP HIM ACTIVATING THE TELEPORT IN HIS PALM, THEN SHOT HIM: A SINGLE BLAST TO THE CHEST.
DRAGGING HIM FROM HIS ARMOR WAS THE FINAL INDIGNITY. HIS ATTACKER WANTED TO—
WAIT.
THIS WASN'T JUST A BLAST TO THE CHEST...
...THIS WAS A BLAST FROM A FUSION CANNON.


WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I'M SAYING THIS IS A FUTURE LOST LIGHT AND FUTURE YOU IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN.
WE'VE EXPLORED ONE ROOM...!
I'M SAYING THAT THE ONLY TWO PEOPLE WHO COULD REIN YOU IN—YOUR CO-CAPTAIN AND YOUR FIRST OFFICER—HAVE BEEN MURDERED.
I'M SAYING AT LEAST ONE OF THEM WAS KILLED BY YOUR WEAPON OF CHOICE.
I DON'T EVEN HAVE MY CANNON ANYMORE...
"...YOU MADE ME BURN IT AFTER I SURRENDERED."
"SO? ANYTHING CAN BE REPLACED."
WHOEVER KILLED MAGNUS KNEW ABOUT THE TELEPORT IN HIS HAND. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THERE WAS A "MINIMUS AMBUS" UNTIL...
UNTIL...
UNTIL YOU JUST TOLD ME.
EXACTLY. AND YOU'LL BE IN POSSESSION OF THAT KNOWLEDGE WHEN YOU TEAR THIS SHIP APART.
I WOULD NEVER DO THAT.
"NEVER"? JUST LIKE YOU'D NEVER BECOME AN AUTOBOT?
YOU'RE... RIGHT.
GRRRR!
NO, RAVAGE, HE IS. I'M NO LONGER QUALIFIED TO PREDICT MY OWN FUTURE.
IN FACT, GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES—
—YOU SHOULD LOCK US UP. IT'S A SMALL GESTURE, BUT... LOCK US UP UNTIL YOU'VE WORKED OUT WHAT HAPPENED.

"I PROMISE I WON'T RESIST."

THE OTHER HALF OF THE SHIP.

THE LAST 24 HOURS REALLY HAVE BEEN *EXCEPTIONALLY* ODD.

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

DISAPPEARING PEOPLE, DISAPPEARING *SHIPS*, DATA GHOSTS, DEAD DOPPELGÄNGERS...

LOTS OF D'S. AND WHEN DID YOU SEE A DATA GHOST?

THIS MORNING, IN CHROMEDOME'S HAB SUITE. REWIND—HIS *CONJUNX ENDURA*—WAS STANDING THERE IN THE DOORWAY.

?

REWIND'S *DEAD*.

OH!

SORRY, YES, HE GOT KILLED.

OH. THAT'S REALLY SAD.

DO YOU HAVE A *CONJUNX ENDURA*? OR ANY *AMICA ENDURAE*? DO THEY PRACTICE ANY FORM OF ELECTIVE KINSHIP ON CAMINUS?

WHY ARE YOU SMILING?

BECAUSE *YOU!* YOUR *QUESTIONS!* ANYONE ELSE WOULD *SIDLE UP* TO A SUBJECT LIKE THAT...

GAH, WHO'S GOT TIME TO TIPTOE?

WELL, THE ANSWERS ARE NO, YES, AND YES. WHAT ABOUT YOU?

EVER HAD A SPARKMATE?

NAH. BUT THEN I *AM* PRETTY INSUFFERABLE.

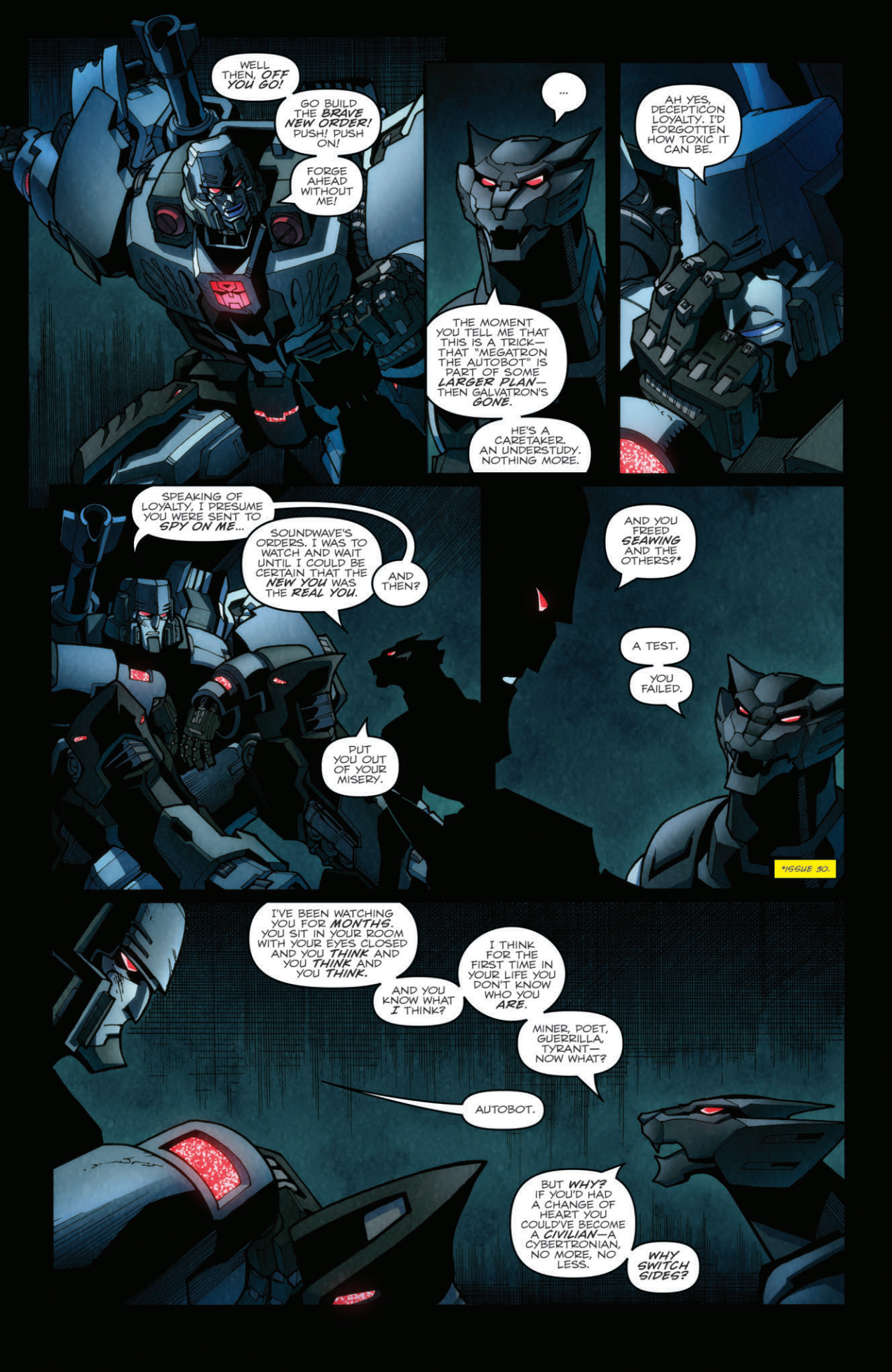
...

SILENT HOWLS OF PROTEST.

DID YOU JUST OPEN THE LIFT DOOR WITH YOUR WRENCH?

L12
OKAY THEN! SO WE GO TO THE ENGINE ROOMS ON LEVEL ONE, TRY TO STOP THE FOAM LEAK, THEN LOOK FOR THE CREW.
PING
OH, YES!
THE RESULTS OF THE SECTOR SWEEP!
I LOVE MY WRENCH.
IS IT TECHNICALLY A WRENCH?
IT'S A WRENCH-SLASH-SCANNER-SLASH-EVERYTHING. BRAINSTORM ADDED A BILLION EXTRAS.
SEE? THERE'S EVEN A LIGHT THAT GOES ON WHEN I'M EXAGGERATING.
ACCORDING TO THE WRENCH, THIS ENTIRE REGION OF SPACE HAS BEEN WORN DOWN.
THERE ARE SIGNS OF WARP JUMPS, SUBSPACE INCURSIONS... LOTS OF RECENT ACTIVITY.
THE WHOLE ENVIRONMENT'S UNSTABLE. WE SHOULD WATCH OUR—
THUNK
OW!
CAREFUL, NIGHTBEAT. THERE'S SOMETHING ON THE FLOOR. SOMETHING HARD.
HARD AND HARD-TO-BELIEVE...
BRAINSTORM'S BRIEFCASE!
L08
I DON'T LIKE THIS. STORMY NEVER LETS THAT OUT OF HIS SIGHT.
WE SHOULD FIND HIM, SEE IF HE'S OKAY.
THE LOCKS ARE DAMAGED.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, AND DON'T. WHATEVER'S INSIDE, I DOUBT IT'S SOFT AND CUDDLY. SOFT AND LETHAL, MAYBE...
L07
AREN'T YOU INTRIGUED?
NO!
MAYBE!
I DON'T KNOW!
I'M GOING TO OPEN IT. ON THE COUNT OF THREE...

A STORE CUPBOARD.
I KNOW YOU HATE TO BE CONTAINED—
—BUT THERE'S NO HARM IN SITTING TIGHT WHILE SKIDS AND THE OTHERS TRY TO WORK OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.
RAARGH!
WHAT—
YOU BETRAYED US!
YOU BETRAYED ME!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?! WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?!
ENOUGH.
IS IT SHADOWPLAY? IS THAT WHAT THIS IS? DID THEY BRAINWASH YOU?
IT'S NOT SHADOWPLAY. AND I'M SORRY IF THAT DISAPPOINTS YOU.
WE BELIEVED IN YOU. WE DEDICATED OUR LIVES TO YOU.
NOT TO ME. TO THE DECEPTICON CAUSE.
YOU ARE THE DECEPTICON CAUSE! AT LEAST YOU WERE...
OH?
WE'RE CARRYING ON WITHOUT YOU. GALVATRON HAS PLANS.
GALVATRON? YOU PUT GALVATRON IN CHARGE?
HE WANTS TO CREATE THE NEW DECEPTICON EMPIRE.


WELL THEN, OFF YOU GO!
GO BUILD THE BRAVE NEW ORDER! PUSH! PUSH ON!
FORGE AHEAD WITHOUT ME!
...
THE MOMENT YOU TELL ME THAT THIS IS A TRICK—THAT "MEGATRON THE AUTOBOT" IS PART OF SOME LARGER PLAN—THEN GALVATRON'S GONE.
HE'S A CARETAKER. AN UNDERSTUDY. NOTHING MORE.
AH YES, DECEPTICON LOYALTY. I'D FORGOTTEN HOW TOXIC IT CAN BE.
SPEAKING OF LOYALTY, I PRESUME YOU WERE SENT TO SPY ON ME...
SOUNDWAVE'S ORDERS. I WAS TO WATCH AND WAIT UNTIL I COULD BE CERTAIN THAT THE NEW YOU WAS THE REAL YOU.
AND THEN?
PUT YOU OUT OF YOUR MISERY.
AND YOU FREED SEAWING AND THE OTHERS?*
A TEST.
YOU FAILED.
*ISSUE 30.
I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU FOR MONTHS. YOU SIT IN YOUR ROOM WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED AND YOU THINK AND YOU THINK AND YOU THINK.
AND YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK?
I THINK FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YOUR LIFE YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
MINER, POET, GUERRILLA, TYRANT—NOW WHAT?
AUTOBOT.
BUT WHY? IF YOU'D HAD A CHANGE OF HEART YOU COULD'VE BECOME A CIVILIAN—A CYBERTRONIAN, NO MORE, NO LESS.
WHY SWITCH SIDES?

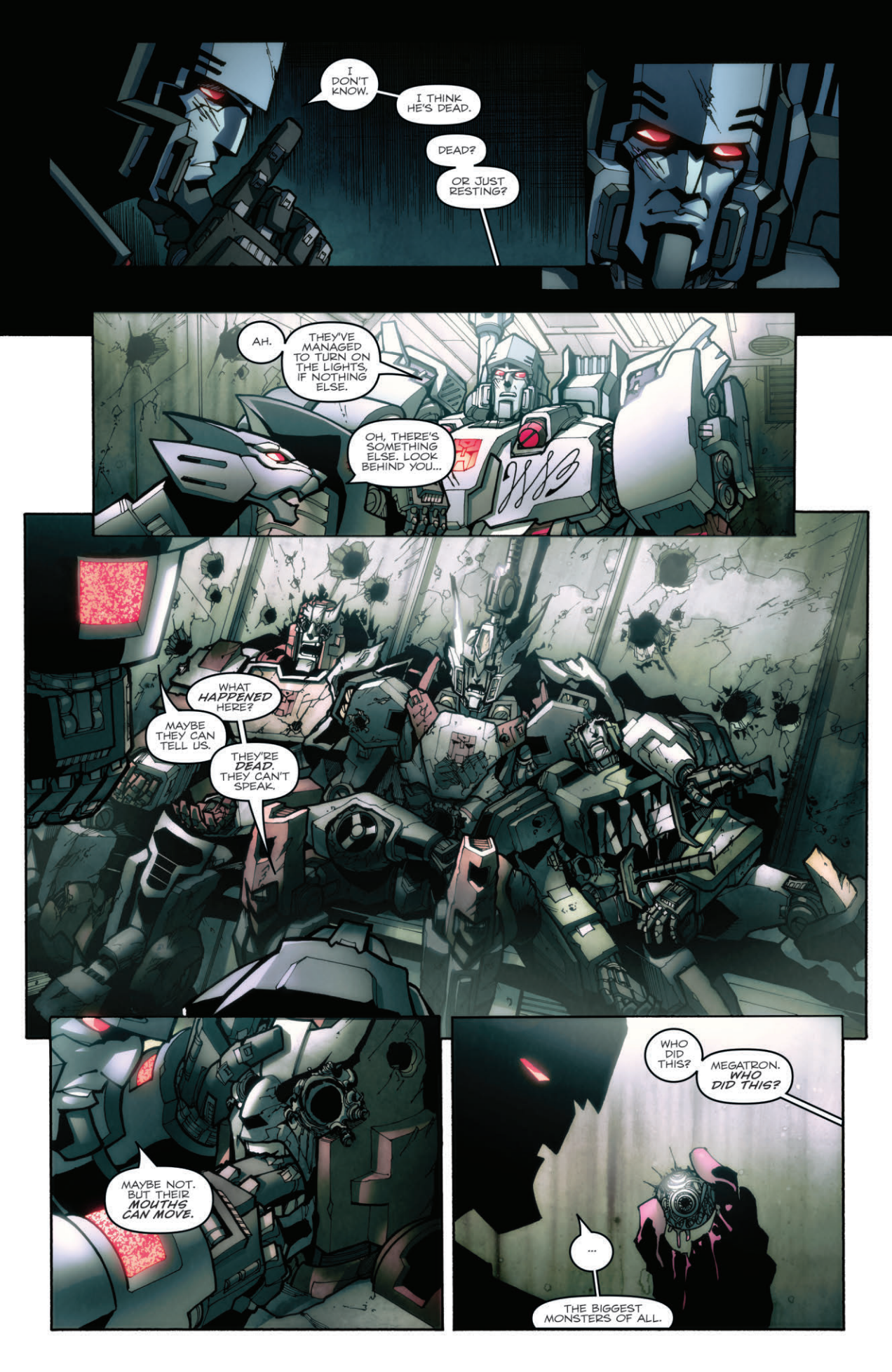
I ONCE TOLD OPTIMUS I KILLED FOR THE SAKE OF KILLING.
I WANTED TO MAKE HIM HURT ME, YOU SEE— BECAUSE WHEN HE HURTS OTHERS, HE HURTS HIMSELF.
AND THE THING IS, WHEN THOSE WORDS WERE IN MY HEAD I DIDN'T THINK I MEANT THEM; BUT WHEN THEY LEFT MY MOUTH, I REALIZED THAT I DID.
IF THE WORLD THINKS YOU'RE A MONSTER, WHAT DOES IT MATTER? THE WORLD IS WRONG.
BUT WHEN YOU START TO THINK OF YOURSELF AS A MONSTER...

I CAME TO HATE THE PERSON I'D BECOME.
AND I DECIDED THAT THE BEST WAY TO LEAVE THAT PERSON BEHIND— MAYBE THE EASIEST WAY— WAS TO BECOME AN AUTOBOT.

YOU'RE NOT A MONSTER, AND WE ALL HAVE WOBBLES.
ALL OF US, FROM TIME TO TIME, WE ALL HAVE WOBBLES AND WE ALL QUESTION WHAT WE'RE DOING. IT'S PART OF BEING A DECEPTICON. YOU'VE SAID SO YOURSELF.
IN YEARS TO COME—WHEN WE'VE WON—YOU'LL REMEMBER THIS CONVERSATION AND LAUGH.

YEARS TO COME?
LOOK AT ME, RAVAGE. I'M OLD. OLD AND WEAK.
THEIR POISON MAKES ME BRITTLE, BUT EVEN AT FULL STRENGTH I'M LONG PAST MY PRIME.
MY SPARK FLICKERS WHEN ONCE IT FLARED, AND THIS BODY... OH, THIS NONSENSE BODY. IT DOESN'T GRAFT TO THE SPARK LIKE THE OTHERS. THERE'S NO PURCHASE. NO BITE.

I DON'T LIKE TO HEAR YOU TALK LIKE THIS.
WHY?
BECAUSE IT'S NOT YOU!
THE MEGATRON WHO TORE DOWN THE SENATE— WHO EMANCIPATED MILLIONS; THE MEGATRON WE FOLLOWED; THE MEGATRON WE LOVED...
WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?


I DON'T KNOW.
I THINK HE'S DEAD.
DEAD?
OR JUST RESTING?
AH.
THEY'VE MANAGED TO TURN ON THE LIGHTS, IF NOTHING ELSE.
OH, THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE. LOOK BEHIND YOU...
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
MAYBE THEY CAN TELL US.
THEY'RE DEAD. THEY CAN'T SPEAK.
MAYBE NOT. BUT THEIR MOUTHS CAN MOVE.
WHO DID THIS?
MEGATRON. WHO DID THIS?
...
THE BIGGEST MONSTERS OF ALL.

L06
THREE...
...TWO...
...ONE AAAAND...

L01
—STOLEN.
THAT WOULD ACTUALLY... YEAH. THAT WOULD ACTUALLY MAKE SENSE.
WOULDN'T IT? AN UNLOCKED CASE, ACCESSIBLE TO ALL...
IN WHICH CASE I SAY CLOSE IT AND MOVE ON.

L03
ESCAPED KILLER GAS? ARE YOU SERIOUS?
OKAY, MAYBE THERE *IS* SOMETHING INSIDE BUT IT'S INVISIBLE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN INVISIBLE? YOU MEAN *CLOAKED?*

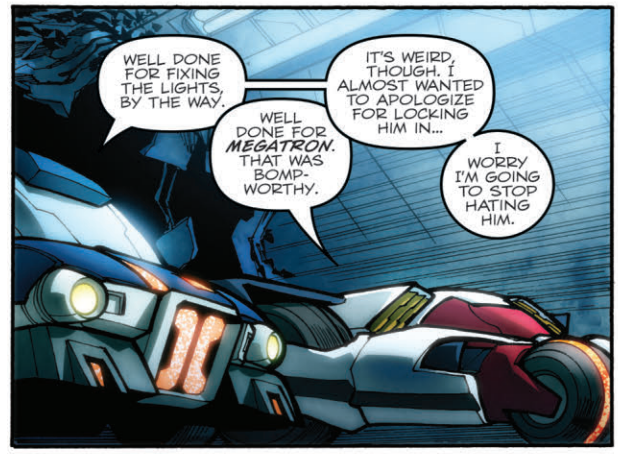
L04
—RIDICULOUS!
GIVE IT HERE. ARE YOU *SURE* IT'S EMPTY? MAYBE THERE WAS SOME KIND OF GAS INSIDE.
KILLER GAS. AND IT'S ESCAPED.

L05
...*OPEN!*
UM...
IT'S *EMPTY!*
BUT— WHAT?
THAT'S RIDICULOUS! THAT'S ABSOLUTELY—

L02
CLOAKED, INVISIBLE, SAME THING. I DON'T KNOW, I'M SPITBALLING.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO CLOAK THE CONTENTS, WHY NOT CLOAK THE BRIEFCASE ITSELF?
I DON'T KNOW!
UNLESS WHATEVER WAS INSIDE WAS—

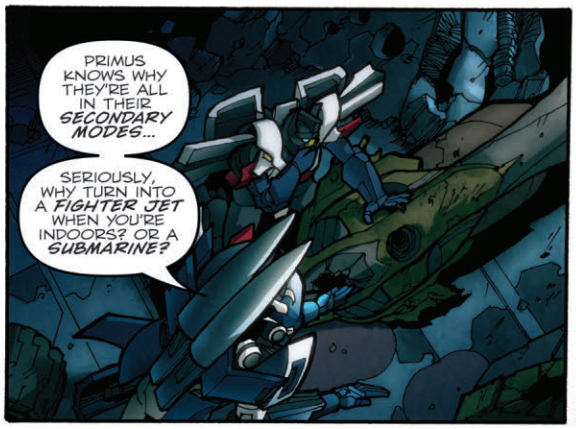
AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS: LIFE'S FULL OF DISAPPOINTMENTS.
NIGHTBEAT...
DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH.
NIGHTBEAT!
FORGET THE STUPID BRIEFCASE AND OPEN YOUR EYES...
IT'S... TAILGATE, ISN'T IT?
YEAH. POOR KID.
HANG ON. WE'RE IN THE ENGINE ROOMS, RIGHT?
YES.
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SHIP...
YES. WHY?
NOTHING, IT'S JUST... IF WE'RE IN THE ENGINE ROOMS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SHIP...
...WHERE DO THESE STAIRS GO?

WHERE'D RIPTIDE RUN OFF TO?
DIDN'T YOU HEAR, "LAST ONE TO THE BRIDGE HAS TO POLISH MEGATRON'S BADGE"?
THAT WAS HIM?
NO, THAT WAS ME. I WANTED SOME PEACE AND QUIET.


WELL DONE FOR FIXING THE LIGHTS, BY THE WAY.
WELL DONE FOR MEGATRON. THAT WAS BOMP-WORTHY.
IT'S WEIRD, THOUGH. I ALMOST WANTED TO APOLOGIZE FOR LOCKING HIM IN...
I WORRY I'M GOING TO STOP HATING HIM.

A DECEPTICON KILLS AN AUTOBOT, YOU HATE HIM. BUT A MILLION AUTOBOTS? A BILLION? IT'S MEANINGLESS.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM: THE GREATER THE CRIME, THE HARDER IT IS TO PROCESS A RESPONSE.
GUYS?

ANY ADVICE ON HOW I CAN UN-SEE THIS?
BY THE CELESTIAL SPIRES... ARE THEY DEAD?
YEAH. VERY MUCH SO.


PRIMUS KNOWS WHY THEY'RE ALL IN THEIR SECONDARY MODES...
SERIOUSLY, WHY TURN INTO A FIGHTER JET WHEN YOU'RE INDOORS? OR A SUBMARINE?

ODD. THERE ARE TWO HOLES IN EVERY CORPSE: ONE GUNSHOT WOUND AND ONE...
WHAT IS THAT?
SOME KIND OF BOREHOLE?

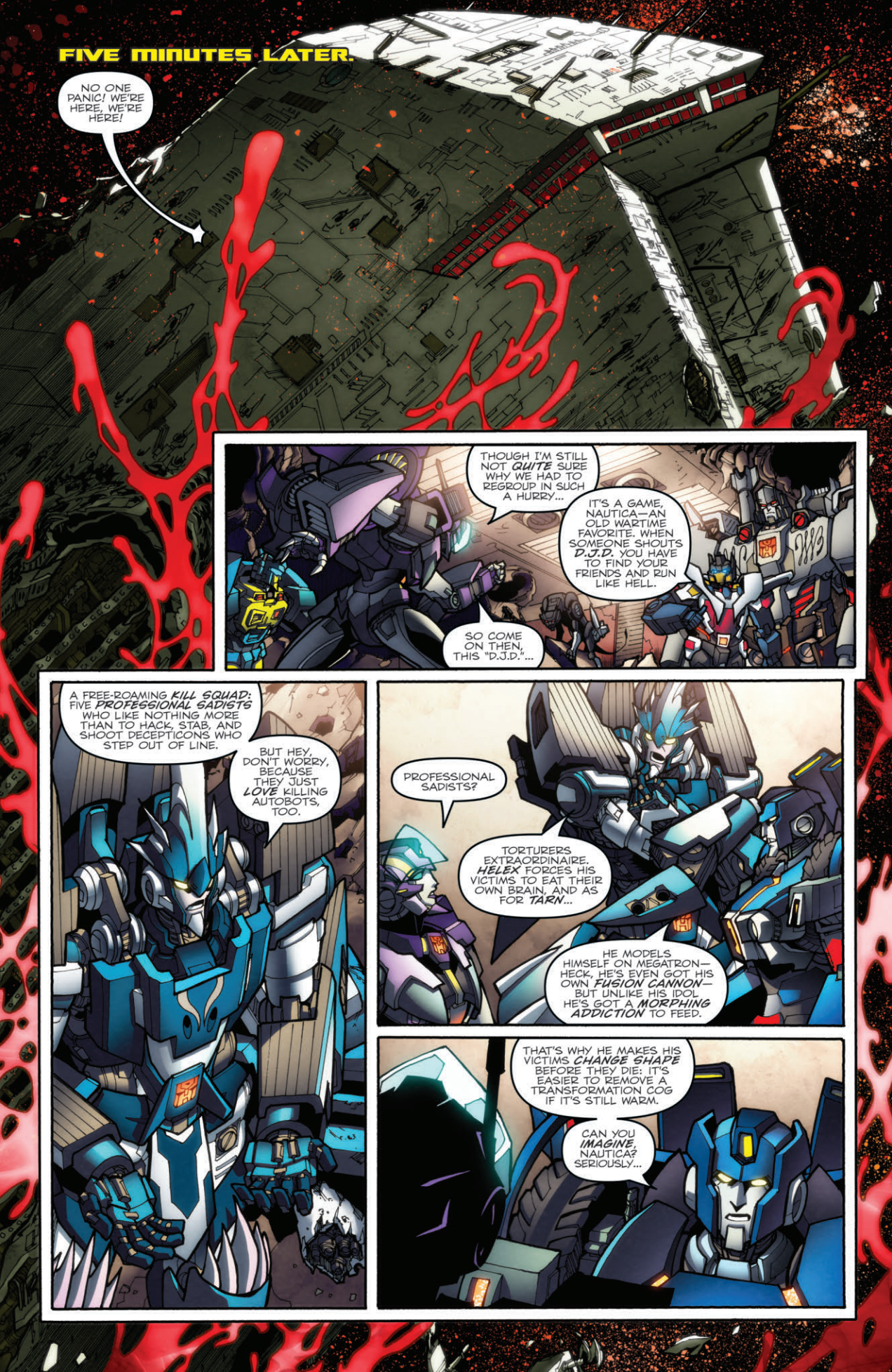
YEARS AGO, I WAS INTRODUCED TO THE WORLD OF CEREBRAL DOWSING.
A FRIEND OF MINE, YOU COULD SHOW HIM ANY ALT MODE—ANY AT ALL—AND HE COULD TELL YOU WHERE TO FIND THE BRAIN MODULE.
IT MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT EVERYONE HERE HAS BEEN SHOT IN THE HEAD. THIS IS A MASS EXECUTION.

AS FOR THE BOREHOLE, MAYBE IF I CAN REACH DOWN I CAN FIND OUT WHAT—
OH NO. OH HELL.
SOMETHING'S MISSING.

ER—ARE YOU OKAY TO TALK? IT'S NIGHTBEAT FOR YOU.
SERIOUSLY, YOU LOOK TERRIBLE.

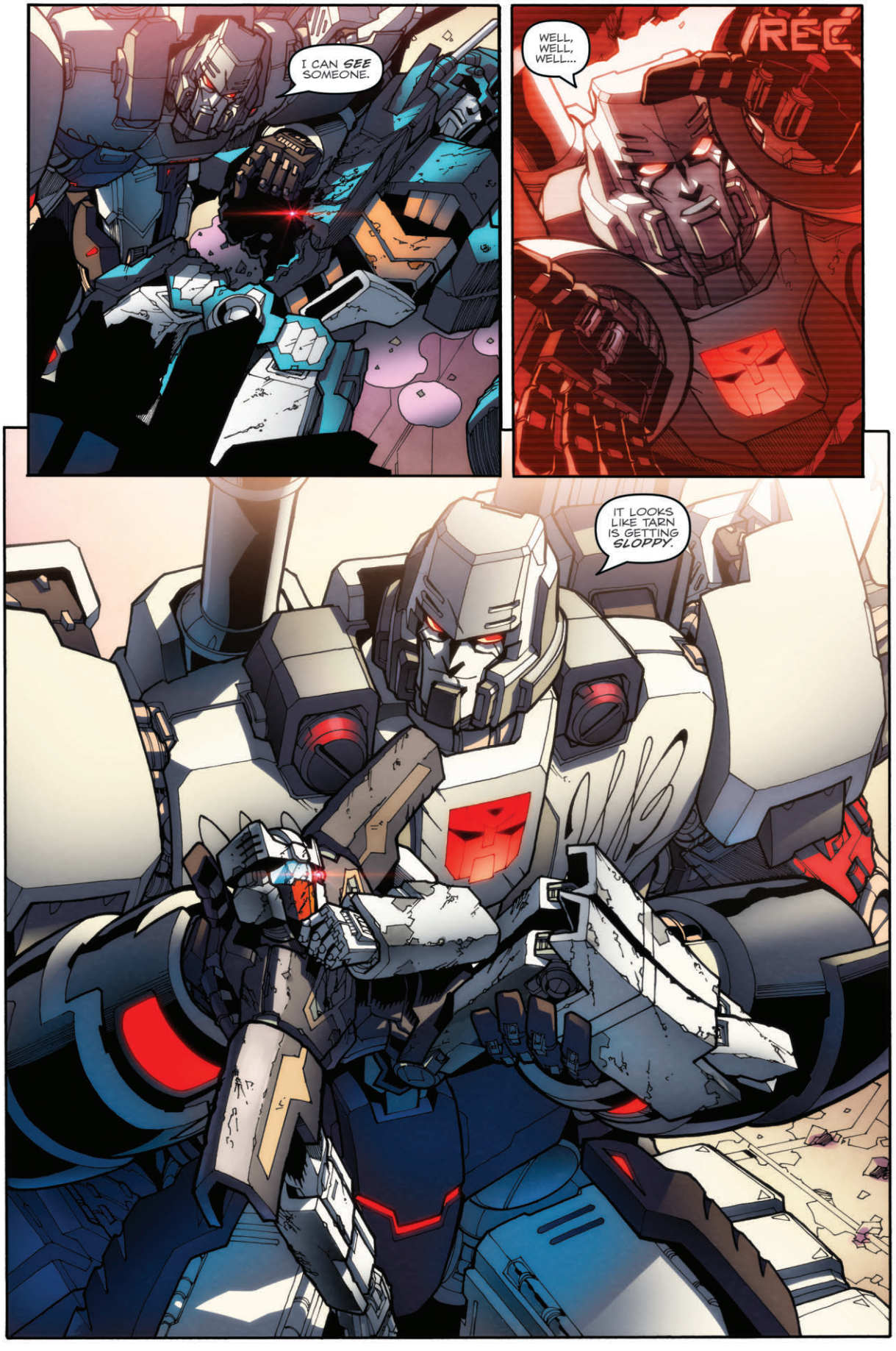
IT'S SKIDS. YOU AND NAUTICA NEED TO COME BACK NOW. WE'RE LEAVING.
DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT WE'VE FOUND?
WAIT. NOW MEGATRON'S TRYING TO GET THROUGH...

WHAT IS IT?
I'VE FOUND SOME AUTOBOTS— AND THEY'VE BEEN KILLED IN A VERY SPECIFIC WAY.
DON'T TELL ME: THEY'RE MISSING TRANSFORMATION COGS.
NO... BUT I THINK YOU AND I HAVE REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSION.
THIS SHIP WAS ATTACKED—
"—BY THE DECEPTICON JUSTICE DIVISION."


FIVE MINUTES LATER.
NO ONE PANIC! WE'RE HERE, WE'RE HERE!
THOUGH I'M STILL NOT QUITE SURE WHY WE HAD TO REGROUP IN SUCH A HURRY...
IT'S A GAME, NAUTICA—AN OLD WARTIME FAVORITE. WHEN SOMEONE SHOUTS D.J.D. YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR FRIENDS AND RUN LIKE HELL.
SO COME ON THEN, THIS "D.J.D."...
A FREE-ROAMING KILL SQUAD: FIVE PROFESSIONAL SADISTS WHO LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN TO HACK, STAB, AND SHOOT DECEPTICONS WHO STEP OUT OF LINE.
BUT HEY, DON'T WORRY, BECAUSE THEY JUST LOVE KILLING AUTOBOTS, TOO.
PROFESSIONAL SADISTS?
TORTURERS EXTRAORDINAIRE. HELEX FORCES HIS VICTIMS TO EAT THEIR OWN BRAIN, AND AS FOR TARN...
HE MODELS HIMSELF ON MEGATRON—HECK, HE'S EVEN GOT HIS OWN FUSION CANNON—BUT UNLIKE HIS IDOL HE'S GOT A MORPHING ADDICTION TO FEED.
THAT'S WHY HE MAKES HIS VICTIMS CHANGE SHAPE BEFORE THEY DIE: IT'S EASIER TO REMOVE A TRANSFORMATION COG IF IT'S STILL WARM.
CAN YOU IMAGINE, NAUTICA? SERIOUSLY...

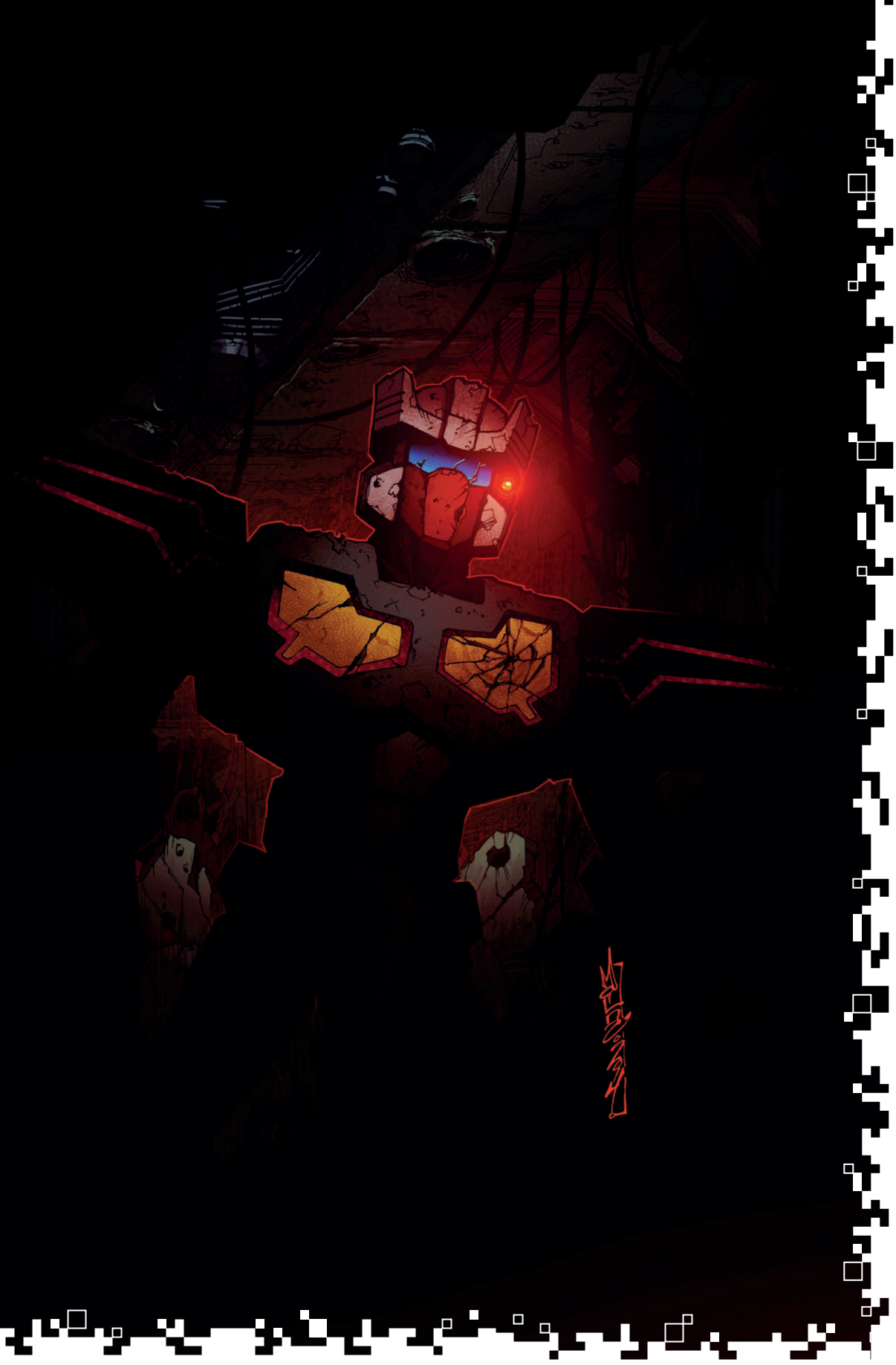
"...CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT WAS LIKE WHEN THESE GUYS ARRIVED ON BOARD?"
I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
THE D.J.D. AREN'T LOYAL TO ME; THEY'RE LOYAL TO THE DECEPTICON CAUSE.
YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO PUBLICALLY RENOUNCE THAT CAUSE AND FOR THERE NOT TO BE CONSEQUENCES.

EXCEPT... NO. YOU'RE SUGGESTING THAT THE D.J.D. ARE ACTING IN RESPONSE TO YOUR DEFECTION—
—BUT NAUTICA AND I JUST FOUND OVERLORD—DEAD—IN A CELL UNDERNEATH THE SHIP.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE.
REMEMBER REWIND?
THE DATA GHOST...
HE DIED BECAUSE OVERLORD ESCAPED FROM HIS CELL. SO HOW COME HE WAS THERE FOR THE D.J.D. TO FIND?
I DON'T KNOW, IT'S LIKE ESTABLISHED EVENTS ARE PLAYING OUT DIFFERENTLY. LIKE THEY'RE BEING RE-EDITED.
WHAT NOW?!
THE SHIP'S REACTING TO THE QUANTUM FOAM.
TIME TO GO. I'VE FIXED THE RODPOD.
BUT WE HAVEN'T FINISHED LOOKING FOR SURVIVORS...
THERE ARE NO SURVIVORS.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
THERE ARE NO SURVIVORS.
BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW?
BECAUSE I TRAINED THE D.J.D. TO BE THOROUGH.
HOLD ON. SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT.
I CAN SMELL SOMEONE...


I CAN SEE SOMEONE.
WELL, WELL, WELL...
REC
IT LOOKS LIKE TARN IS GETTING SLOPPY.

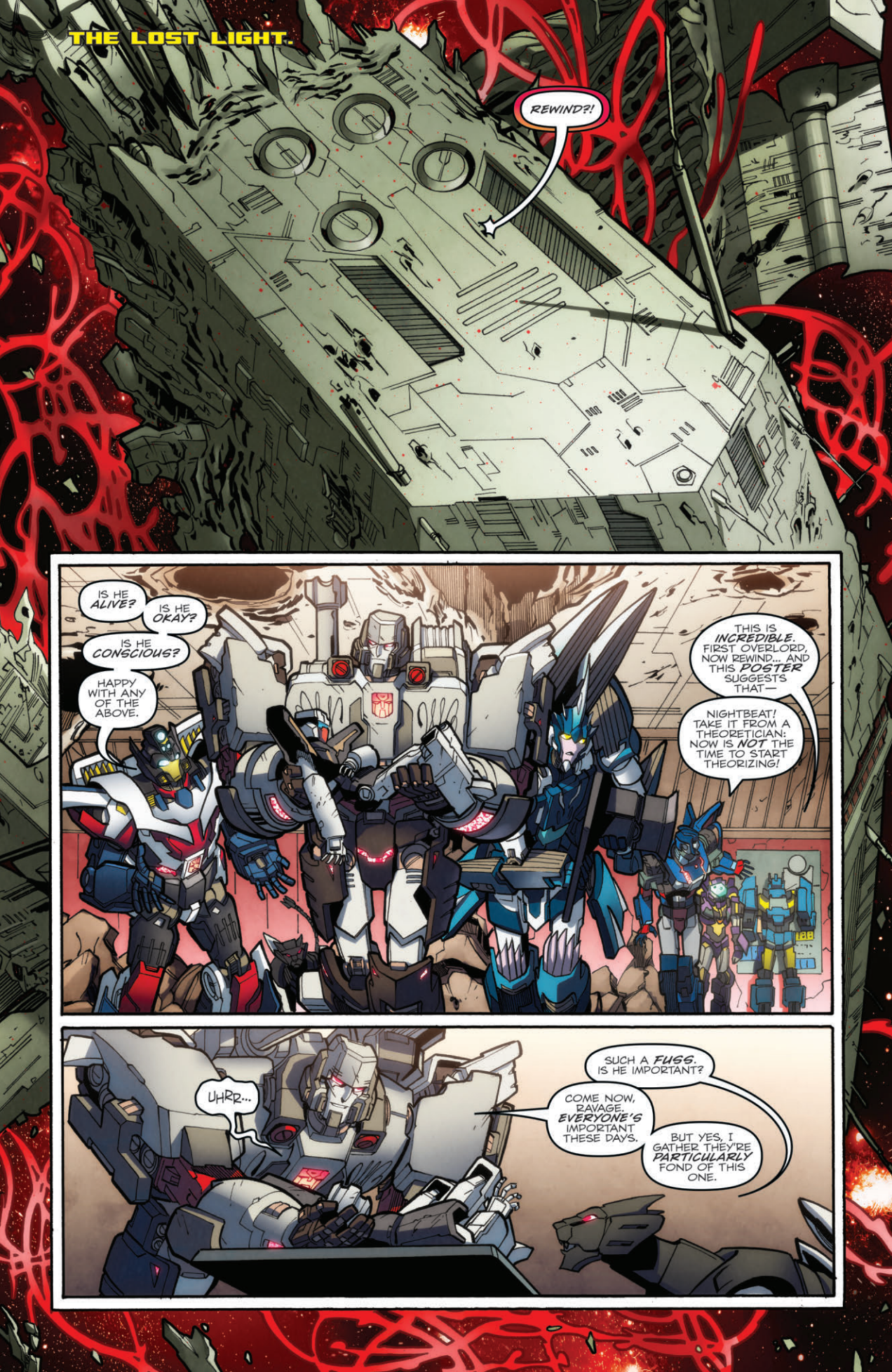
□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #32 COVER B

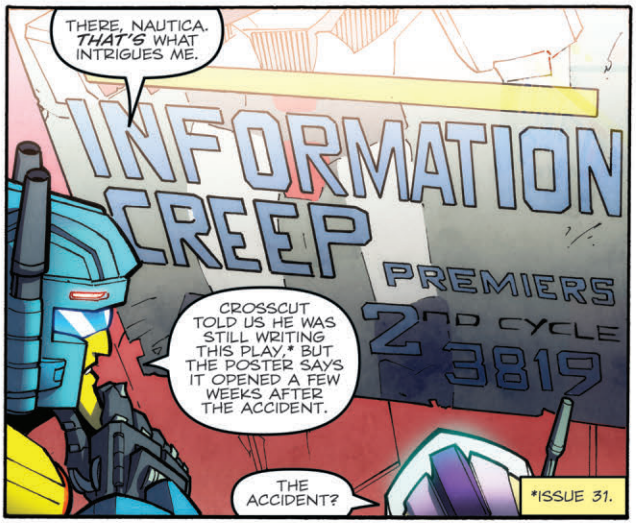
by **NICK ROCHE** Colors by **JOSH BURCHAM**



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #33 COVER A

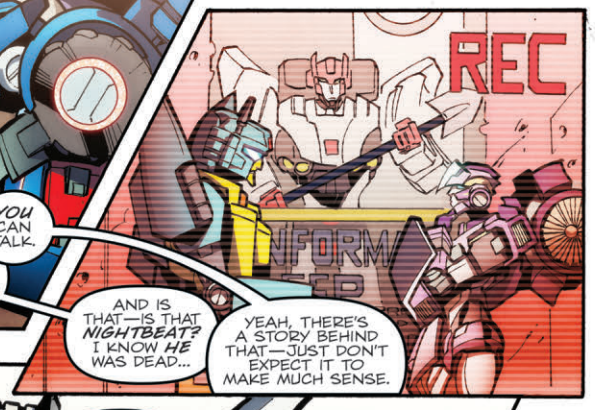
by **ALEX MILNE** Colors by **JOSH PEREZ**

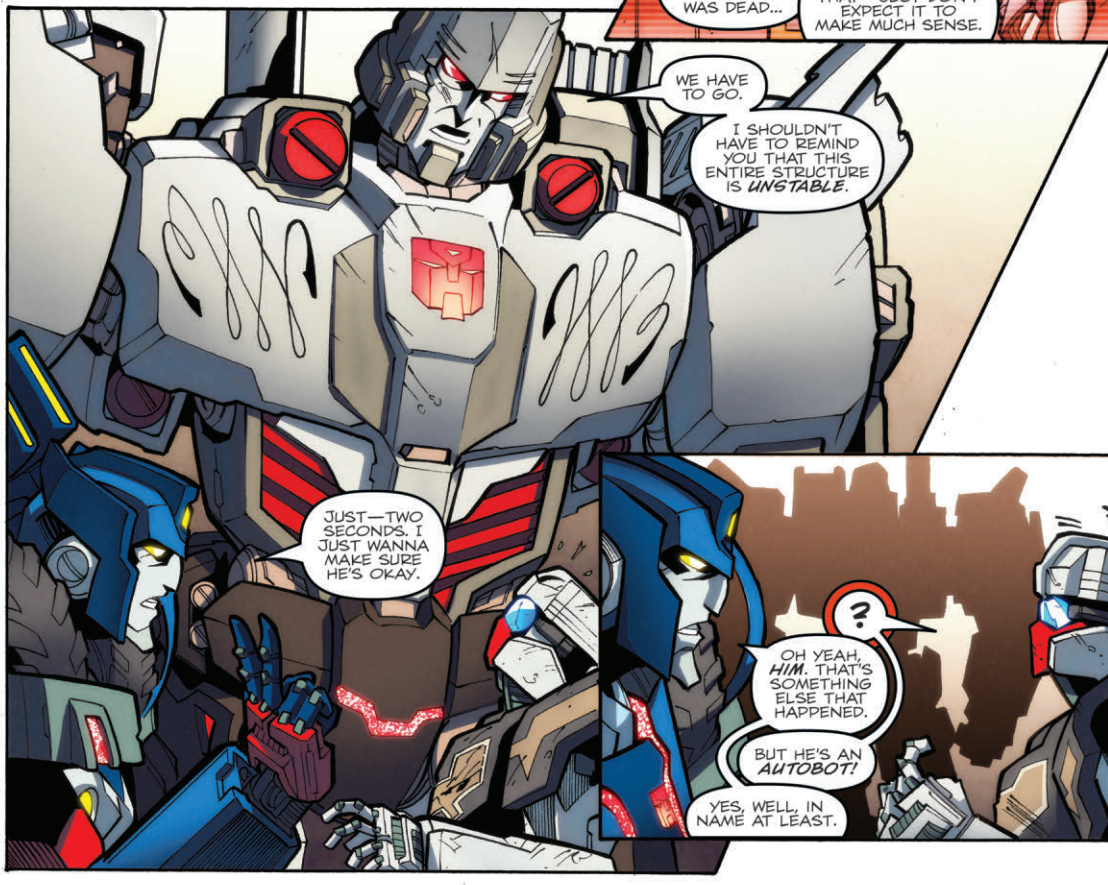

THE LOST LIGHT.
REWIND?!
IS HE ALIVE?
IS HE OKAY?
IS HE CONSCIOUS?
HAPPY WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE.
THIS IS INCREDIBLE. FIRST OVERLORD, NOW REWIND... AND THIS POSTER SUGGESTS THAT—
NIGHTBEAT! TAKE IT FROM A THEORETICIAN: NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO START THEORIZING!
UHRR...
SUCH A FUSS. IS HE IMPORTANT?
COME NOW, RAVAGE. EVERYONE'S IMPORTANT THESE DAYS.
BUT YES, I GATHER THEY'RE PARTICULARLY FOND OF THIS ONE.


THERE, NAUTICA. *THAT'S* WHAT INTRIGUES ME.
INFORMATION
CREEP
PREMIERS
2ND CYCLE
3819
CROSSCUT TOLD US HE WAS STILL WRITING THIS PLAY,* BUT THE POSTER SAYS IT OPENED A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE ACCIDENT.
THE ACCIDENT?
*ISSUE 31.

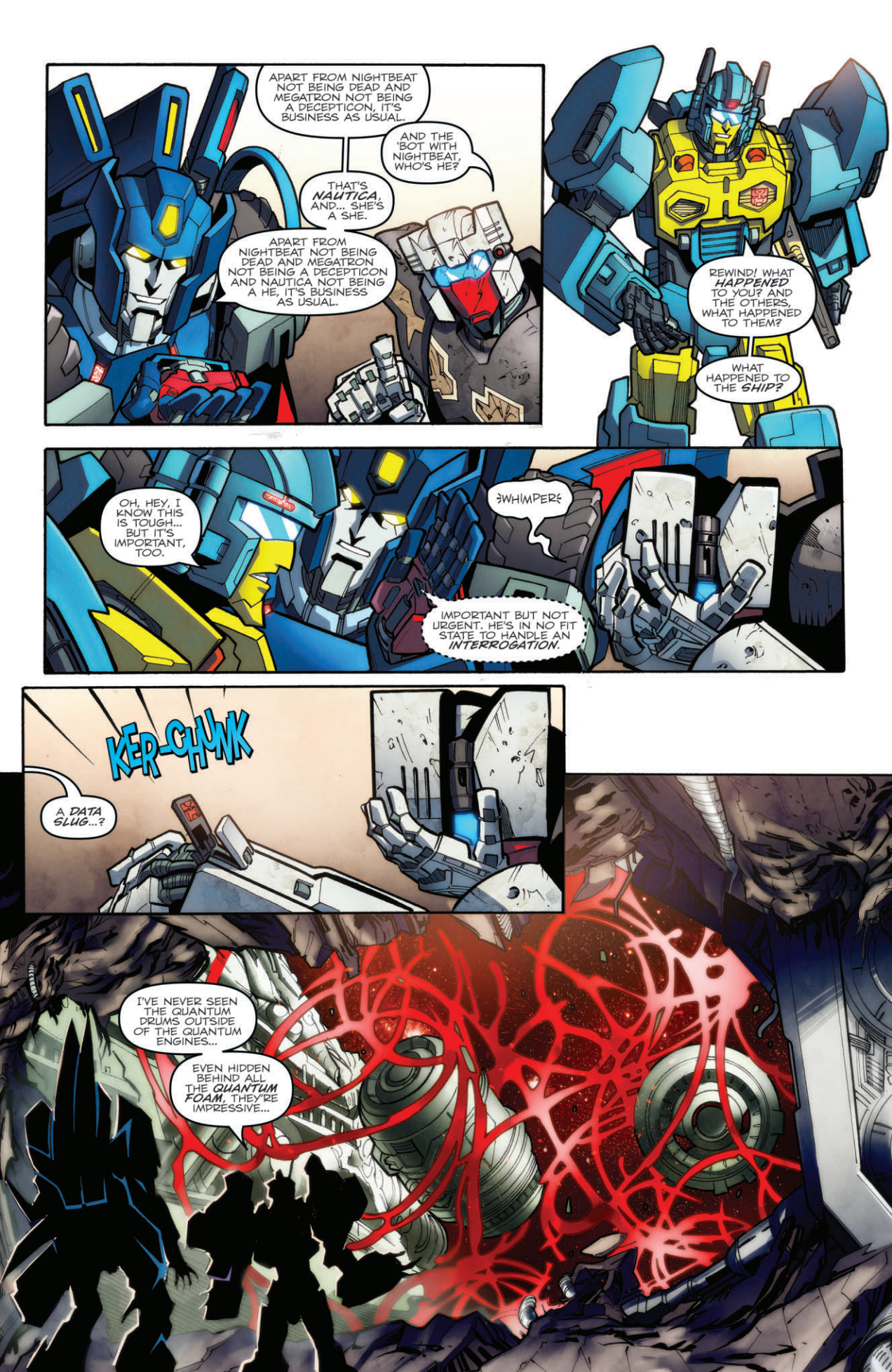
SORRY, *THE LAUNCH.*
WHEN THE *LOST LIGHT* FIRST LEFT CYBERTRON, ITS THRUSTERS EXPLODED AND IT ENDED UP A STONE'S THROW FROM NOWHERE.*
YOU KNOW HOW MEGATRON WAS ALWAYS SAYING THAT RODIMUS—
—COULDN'T EVEN *TAKE OFF* PROPERLY...! YES! ANOTHER *IN-JOKE* I CAN TICK OFF THE LIST...
*ISSUE 1.

WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU WOKE UP. YOU PULLED THROUGH. EVERYTHING ELSE IS *DETAIL.*
IT'S *SKIDS,* ISN'T IT? WE ALL THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD...
YOU CAN TALK.


REC
AND IS THAT—IS THAT *NIGHTBEAT?* I KNOW *HE* WAS DEAD...
YEAH, THERE'S A STORY BEHIND THAT—JUST DON'T EXPECT IT TO MAKE MUCH SENSE.


WE HAVE TO GO.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO REMIND YOU THAT THIS ENTIRE STRUCTURE IS *UNSTABLE.*
JUST—TWO SECONDS. I JUST WANNA MAKE SURE HE'S OKAY.

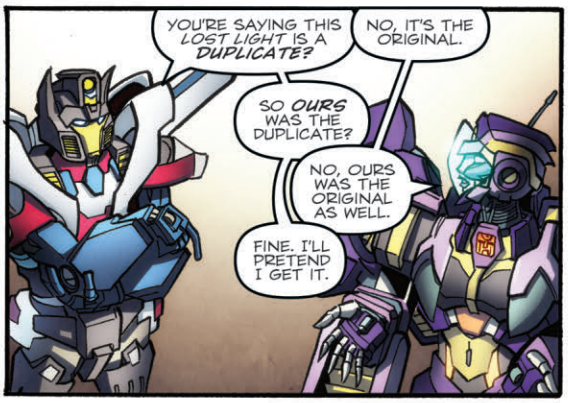
?
OH YEAH, *HIM.* THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE THAT HAPPENED.
BUT HE'S AN *AUTOBOT!*
YES, WELL, IN NAME AT LEAST.

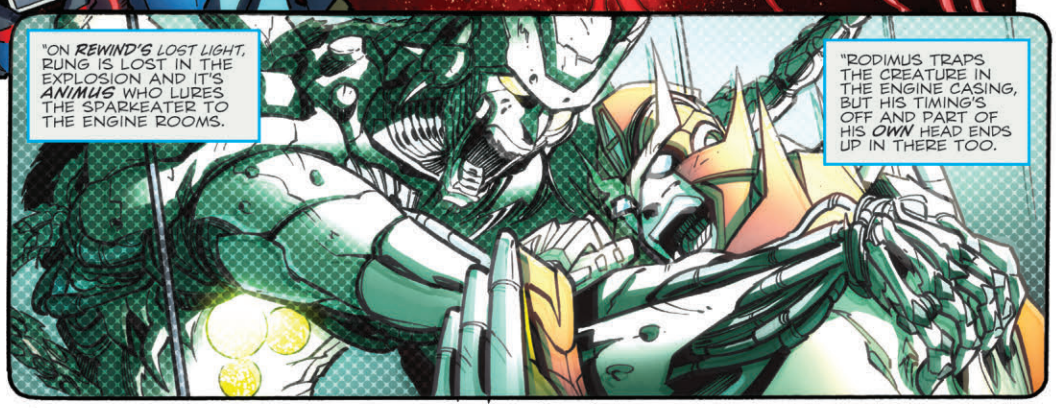

APART FROM NIGHTBEAT NOT BEING DEAD AND MEGATRON NOT BEING A DECEPTICON, IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL.
AND THE 'BOT WITH NIGHTBEAT, WHO'S HE?
THAT'S NAUTICA, AND... SHE'S A SHE.
APART FROM NIGHTBEAT NOT BEING DEAD AND MEGATRON NOT BEING A DECEPTICON AND NAUTICA NOT BEING A HE, IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL.
REWIND! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? AND THE OTHERS, WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SHIP?
OH, HEY, I KNOW THIS IS TOUGH... BUT IT'S IMPORTANT, TOO.
WHIMPER
IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT. HE'S IN NO FIT STATE TO HANDLE AN INTERROGATION.
KER-CHUNK
A DATA SLUG...?
I'VE NEVER SEEN THE QUANTUM DRUMS OUTSIDE OF THE QUANTUM ENGINES...
EVEN HIDDEN BEHIND ALL THE QUANTUM FOAM, THEY'RE IMPRESSIVE...

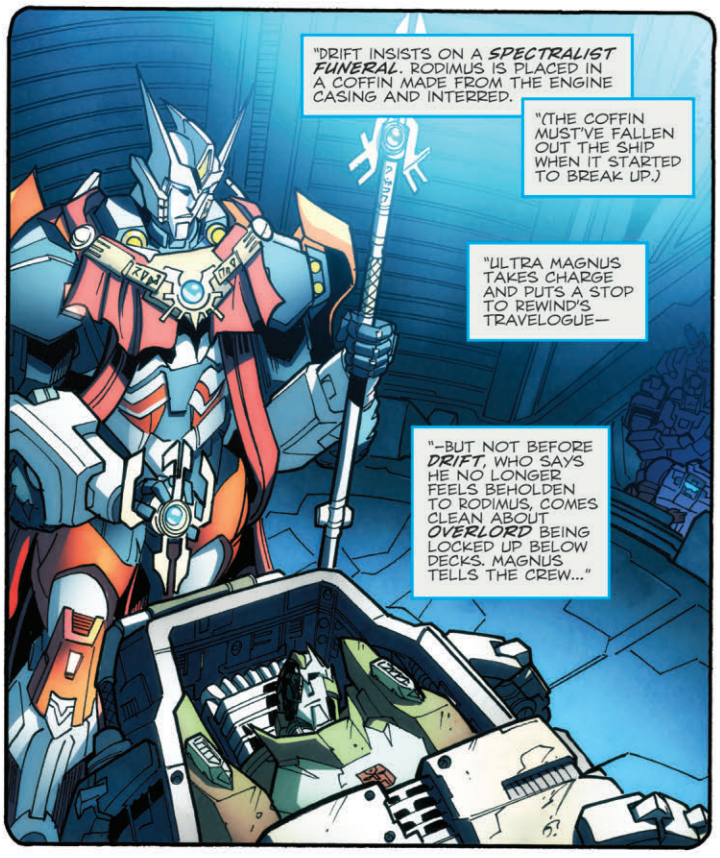
NAUTICA. TO BE A QUANTUM MECHANIC, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PUT THE WORD "QUANTUM" IN FRONT OF LOTS OF OTHER WORDS. TRUE OR FALSE?
EH?
BOTH.
IT'S BOTH, SIMULTANEOUSLY. TRUE AND FALSE. IT DEPENDS ON THE QUANTIZED ENERGY STATE OF EACH PROPOSITION.
EH?
OH.
IT'S A JOKE.
ARE JOKES NOT FUNNY WHERE YOU COME FROM?
IT IS FUNNY! IT'S FUNNY BECAUSE ON A QUANTUM LEVEL, EVERY UNOBSERVED OBJECT EXISTS IN A SUSPENDED TWIN-STATE UNTIL...
UNTIL...
GOOD GRIEF.
MEGATRON! CAPTAIN!
EVERYBODY!
I'VE WORKED IT OUT! ALL OF IT! WHY OUR SHIP DISAPPEARED, WHERE THIS SHIP CAME FROM— EVERYTHING!
THE FLOOR IS YOURS...
IMPRESS US.
QUANTUM ENGINES LET YOU JUMP FROM POINT A TO POINT B, BYPASSING THE DISTANCE IN-BETWEEN.
OKAY?
POINT A IS ALWAYS FIXED: IT'S WHERE YOU ARE WHEN YOU MAKE THE JUMP. BUT THERE ARE BILLIONS OF POTENTIAL POINT B'S. BY SELECTING ONE, YOU ELIMINATE ALL THE OTHERS.
I THINK THAT WHEN THE LOST LIGHT ORIGINALLY TOOK OFF— WHEN IT EXPLODED— THE QUANTUM ENGINES MALFUNCTIONED, AND THE BILLIONS OF POTENTIAL POINT B'S WERE NARROWED DOWN TO NOT ONE... BUT TWO.
FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO POINT B'S, THE LOST LIGHT DID WHAT ANY QUANTUM-POWERED SPACESHIP WOULD DO...

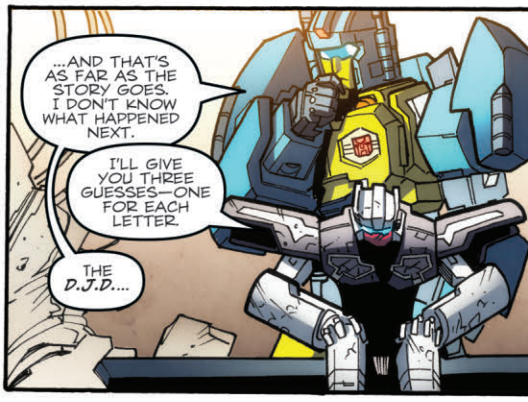
"IT CHOSE *BOTH*."

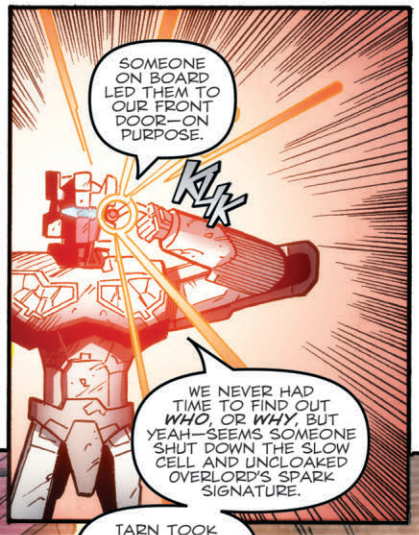
slaughterhouse
PART 2
THE ROAD NOT TAKEN





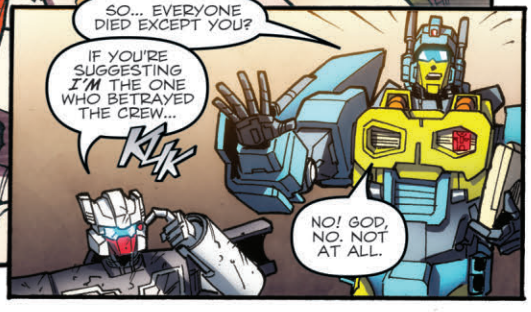


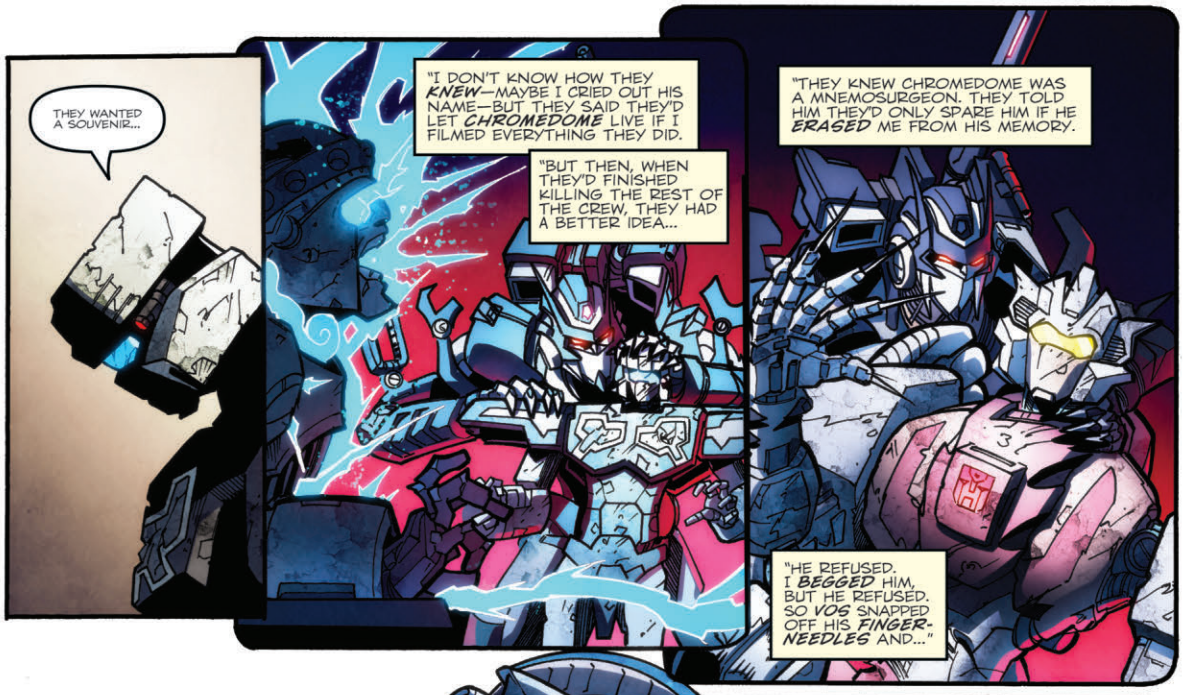




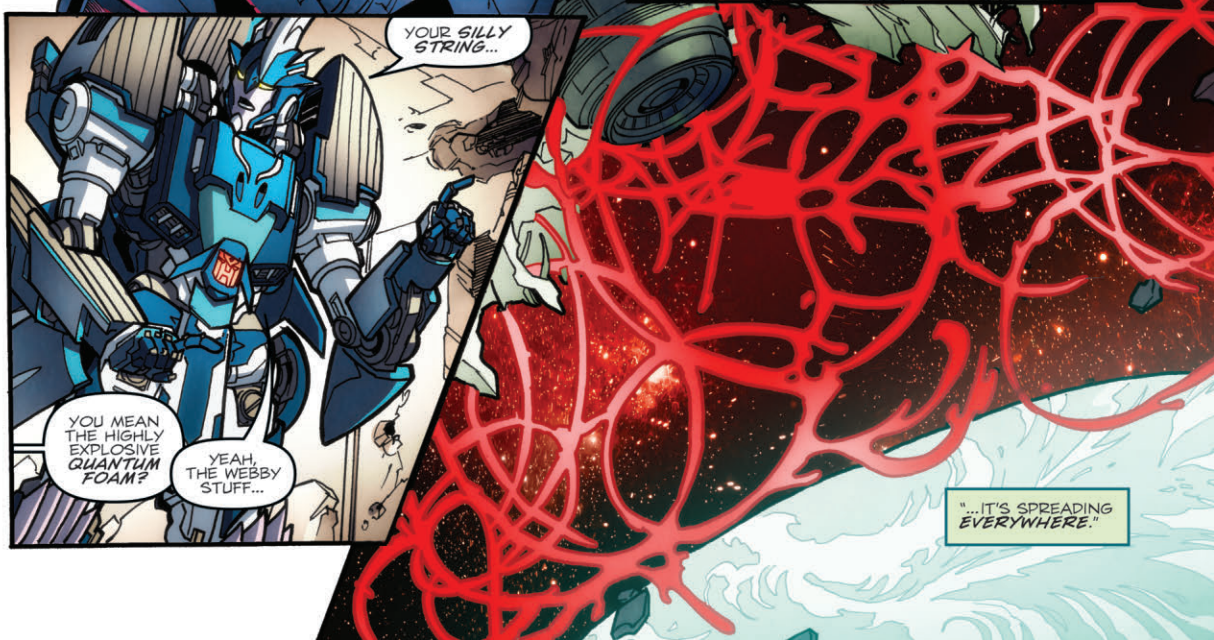
TARN TOOK GREAT PLEASURE IN TELLING US THIS BEFORE HE ATTACKED.

THEY KILLED OVERLORD, OF COURSE—BUT THEY DIDN'T STOP THERE. WHY WOULD THEY? THEY WERE ENJOYING THEMSELVES.

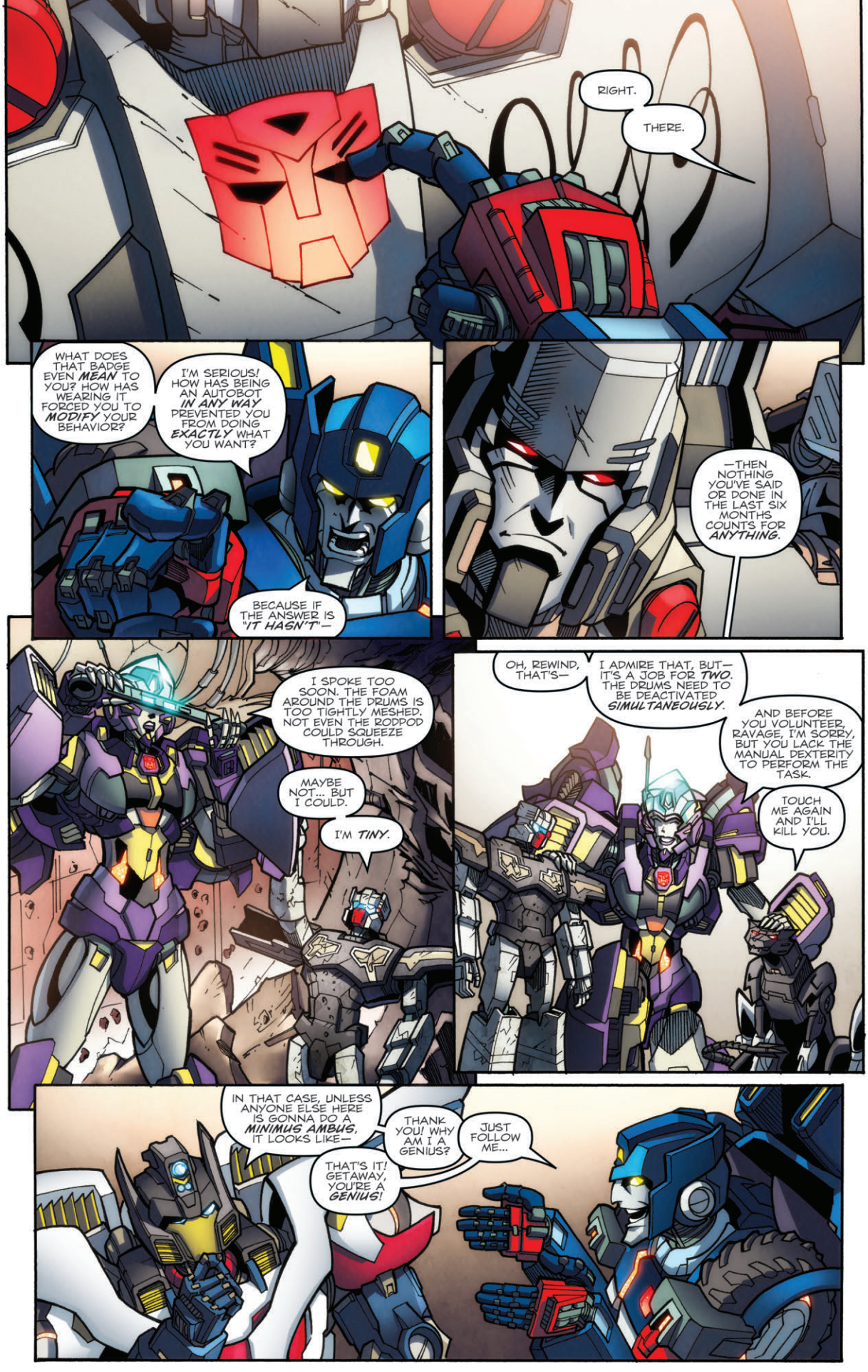


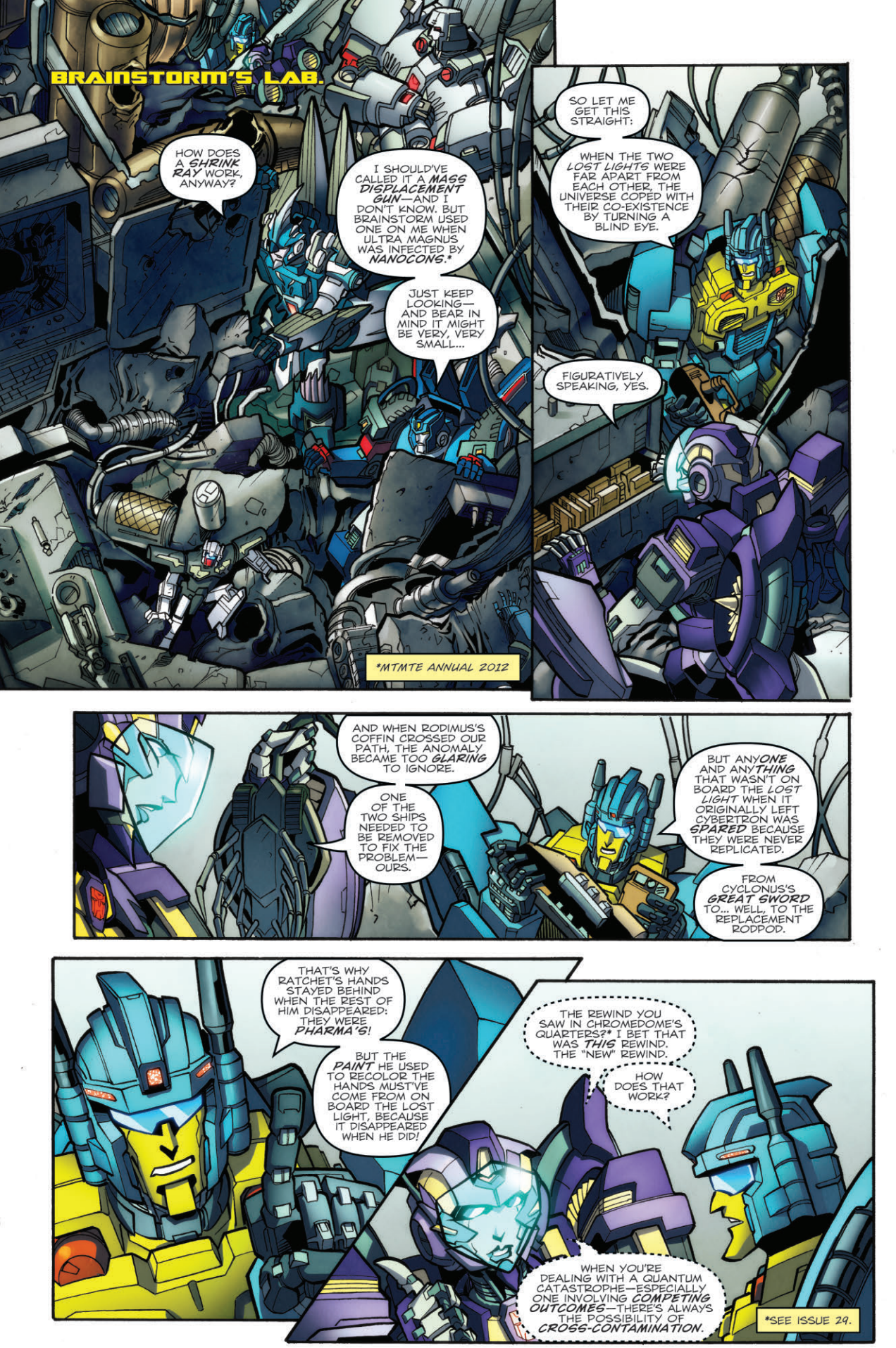

THEY WANTED A SOUVENIR...
"I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY KNEW—MAYBE I CRIED OUT HIS NAME—BUT THEY SAID THEY'D LET CHROMEDOME LIVE IF I FILMED EVERYTHING THEY DID.
"BUT THEN, WHEN THEY'D FINISHED KILLING THE REST OF THE CREW, THEY HAD A BETTER IDEA...
"THEY KNEW CHROMEDOME WAS A MNEMOSURGEON. THEY TOLD HIM THEY'D ONLY SPARE HIM IF HE ERASED ME FROM HIS MEMORY.
"HE REFUSED. I BEGGED HIM, BUT HE REFUSED. SO VOS SNAPPED OFF HIS FINGER-NEEDLES AND..."

I RAN THE SECOND HE STOPPED SCREAMING.
I RAN AND—AND I HID IN THE MAGNUS ARMOR. I MUST'VE PASSED OUT.
SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT... NAUTICA?


YOUR SILLY STRING...
YOU MEAN THE HIGHLY EXPLOSIVE QUANTUM FOAM?
YEAH, THE WEBBY STUFF...
"...IT'S SPREADING EVERYWHERE."

OOH, THAT'S NOT A GOOD THING.
THIS WHOLE SECTOR'S BEEN THINNED OUT BY EXCESSIVE HYPERSPATIAL ACTIVITY.*
IF THE FOAM REACHES A MAJOR WEAK SPOT, THE CHAIN REACTION COULD RIP THAT PLANET TO SHREDS.
THAT'S AN A-LEVEL PLANET—WHICH MEANS IT MIGHT BE POPULATED. WHICH MEANS WE HAVE TO ACT.
THE QUANTUM DRUMS ARE REMOTE LINKED TO THE QUANTUM ENGINES. DEACTIVATING THE DRUMS SHOULD SHUT DOWN THE ENGINES, WHICH SHOULD GET RID OF THE FOAM.
CAN WE TURN THOSE "SHOULDS" INTO "WILLS"?
*SEE LAST ISSUE.
IF MY TWO SHIPS THEORY IS SOUND, THEN THE OTHER LOST LIGHT IS BEING HELD IN KIND OF COSMIC ABEYANCE—LIKE THE UNIVERSE HAS YET TO FULLY COMMIT TO ITS NON-EXISTENCE. WE CAN EXPLOIT THAT.
IF WE SHUT DOWN THE ENGINES COMPLETELY FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE TAKEOFF, ANYTHING LINKED TO OR PRODUCED BY THE ENGINES SHOULD GET CANCELLED OUT.
EXCEPT THE DRUMS ARE ALREADY SURROUNDED BY KILLER FOAM. WE'D HAVE TO FLY THE RODPOD THROUGH A WEB OF DEATH.
IF WE LEAVE NOW AND HEAD AWAY FROM THIS MESS WE CAN OUTRUN ANY EXPLOSION—EVEN A PLANETARY ONE.
NO. WE FIX THIS. LIVES ARE AT RISK.
"MIGHT BE POPULATED," YOU SAID. MIGHT.
IF THAT PLANET WAS TEEMING WITH CYBERTRONIANS, THEN YES, THERE'D BE AN ARGUMENT FOR GOING BACK INTO THE BREACH. BUT I DOUBT THAT'S THE CASE.
AH, YOUR TRUE COLORS. I'D FORGOTTEN HOW PURPLE THEY WERE.
YOU'VE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING ELSE: I AM YOUR PRISONER. I'VE BEEN GRANTED CONDITIONAL BAIL WHILE WE LOOK FOR THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON.
WHERE DOES IT SAY THAT?
WHERE IN MY BAIL TERMS DOES IT SAY—WHERE PRECISELY DOES IT SAY—THAT I HAVE TO RISK MY LIFE TO SAVE A HANDFUL OF STRANGERS?


RIGHT.
THERE.
WHAT DOES THAT BADGE EVEN MEAN TO YOU? HOW HAS WEARING IT FORCED YOU TO MODIFY YOUR BEHAVIOR?
I'M SERIOUS! HOW HAS BEING AN AUTOBOT IN ANY WAY PREVENTED YOU FROM DOING EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT?
BECAUSE IF THE ANSWER IS "IT HASN'T"—
—THEN NOTHING YOU'VE SAID OR DONE IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS COUNTS FOR ANYTHING.
I SPOKE TOO SOON. THE FOAM AROUND THE DRUMS IS TOO TIGHTLY MESHED. NOT EVEN THE RODPOD COULD SQUEEZE THROUGH.
MAYBE NOT... BUT I COULD.
I'M TINY.
OH, REWIND, THAT'S—
I ADMIRE THAT, BUT— IT'S A JOB FOR TWO. THE DRUMS NEED TO BE DEACTIVATED SIMULTANEOUSLY.
AND BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER, RAVAGE, I'M SORRY, BUT YOU LACK THE MANUAL DEXTERITY TO PERFORM THE TASK.
TOUCH ME AGAIN AND I'LL KILL YOU.
IN THAT CASE, UNLESS ANYONE ELSE HERE IS GONNA DO A MINIMUS AMBUS, IT LOOKS LIKE—
THAT'S IT! GETAWAY, YOU'RE A GENIUS!
THANK YOU! WHY AM I A GENIUS?
JUST FOLLOW ME...

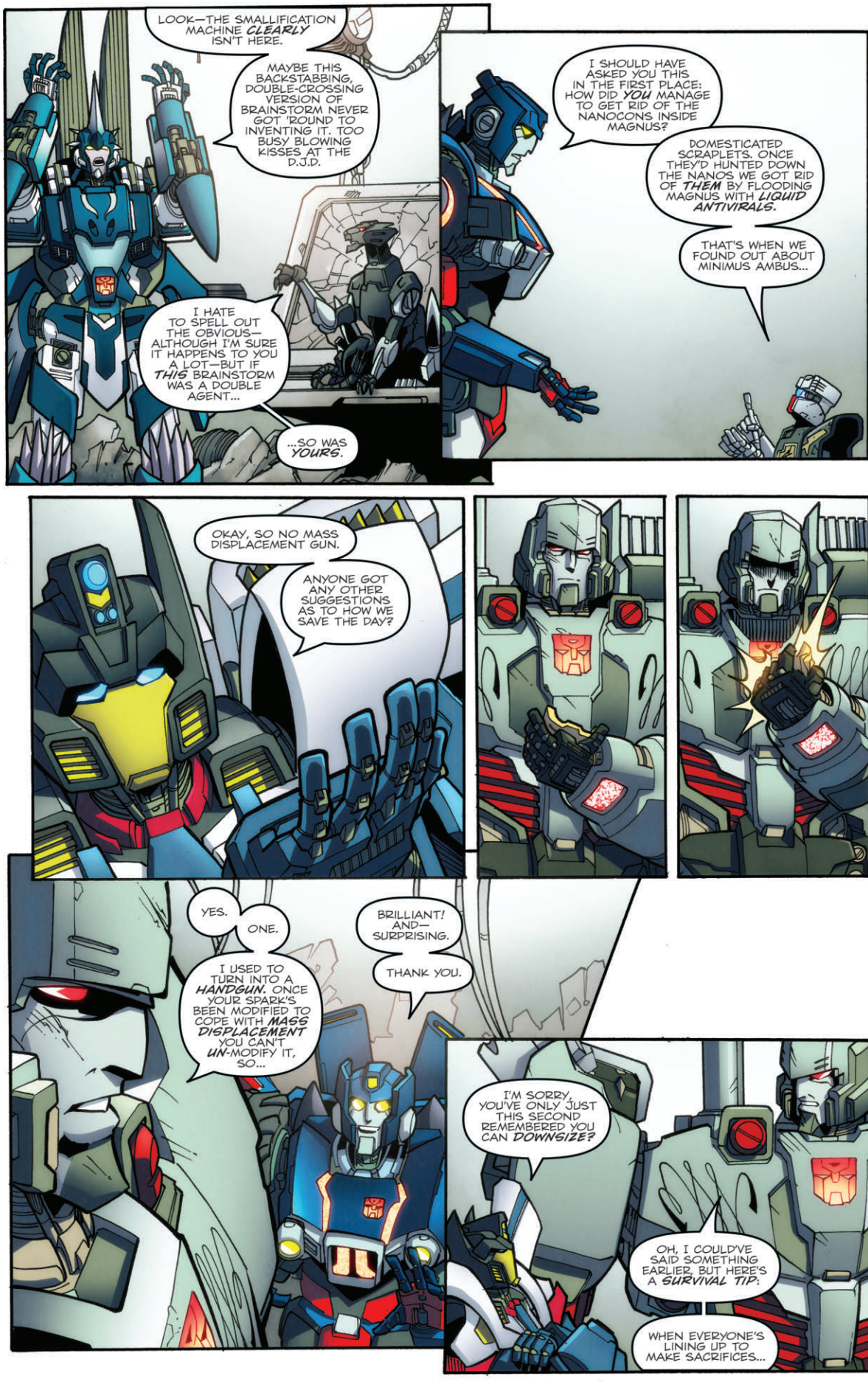

BRAINSTORM'S LAB.
HOW DOES A SHRINK RAY WORK, ANYWAY?
I SHOULD'VE CALLED IT A MASS DISPLACEMENT GUN—AND I DON'T KNOW. BUT BRAINSTORM USED ONE ON ME WHEN ULTRA MAGNUS WAS INFECTED BY NANOCONS.*
JUST KEEP LOOKING—AND BEAR IN MIND IT MIGHT BE VERY, VERY SMALL...
*MTMTE ANNUAL 2012
SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT:
WHEN THE TWO LOST LIGHTS WERE FAR APART FROM EACH OTHER, THE UNIVERSE COPED WITH THEIR CO-EXISTENCE BY TURNING A BLIND EYE.
FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING, YES.
AND WHEN RODIMUS'S COFFIN CROSSED OUR PATH, THE ANOMALY BECAME TOO GLARING TO IGNORE.
ONE OF THE TWO SHIPS NEEDED TO BE REMOVED TO FIX THE PROBLEM—OURS.
BUT ANYONE AND ANYTHING THAT WASN'T ON BOARD THE LOST LIGHT WHEN IT ORIGINALLY LEFT CYBERTRON WAS SPARED BECAUSE THEY WERE NEVER REPLICATED.
FROM CYCLONUS'S GREAT SWORD TO... WELL, TO THE REPLACEMENT RODPOD.
THAT'S WHY RATCHET'S HANDS STAYED BEHIND WHEN THE REST OF HIM DISAPPEARED: THEY WERE PHARMA'S!
BUT THE PAINT HE USED TO RECOLOR THE HANDS MUST'VE COME FROM ON BOARD THE LOST LIGHT, BECAUSE IT DISAPPEARED WHEN HE DID!
THE REWIND YOU SAW IN CHROMEDOME'S QUARTERS?* I BET THAT WAS THIS REWIND. THE "NEW" REWIND.
HOW DOES THAT WORK?
WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH A QUANTUM CATASTROPHE—ESPECIALLY ONE INVOLVING COMPETING OUTCOMES—THERE'S ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY OF CROSS-CONTAMINATION.
*SEE ISSUE 29.

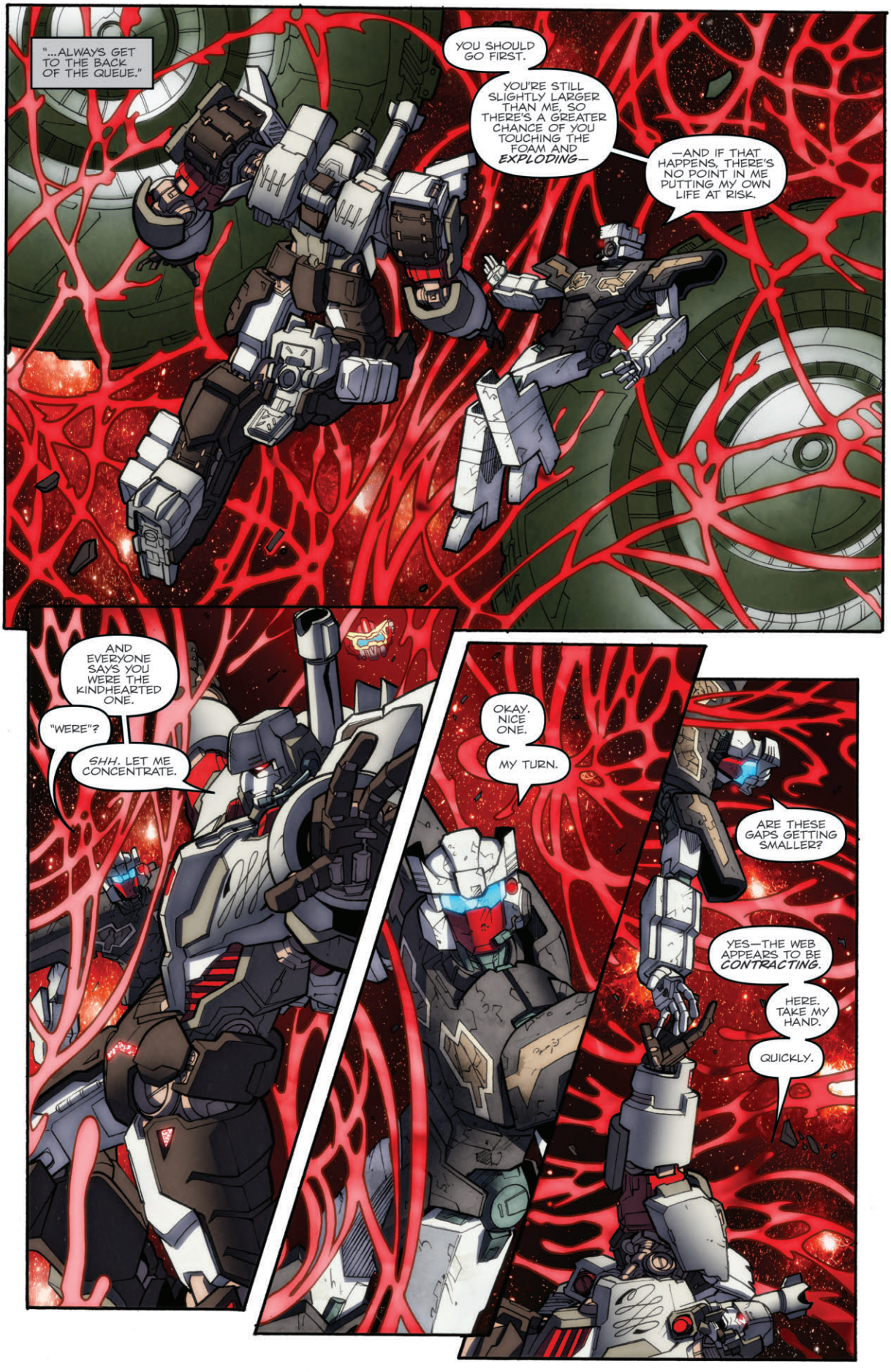
AND MAYBE PART OF OUR REWIND'S MESSAGE WAS REPLACED WITH A RANDOM SNIPPET FROM THE *OTHER* REWIND'S DATA ARCHIVE...
WE WERE AT WAR FOR FOUR MILLION YEARS. OF ALL THE SOUNDS REWIND RECORDED IN HIS LIFETIME, WHICH DO YOU THINK WAS THE MOST COMMON?
BUT— *A SCREAM?* WHAT ARE THE CHANCES...?
SOMETIMES I FORGET HOW LUCKY I AM TO HAVE MISSED THE FIGHTING.
YEAH, BUT LOOK AROUND YOU. EVEN NOW THE WAR'S ENDED, WE MANAGE TO ENCOUNTER OUR FAIR SHARE OF HORRORS...

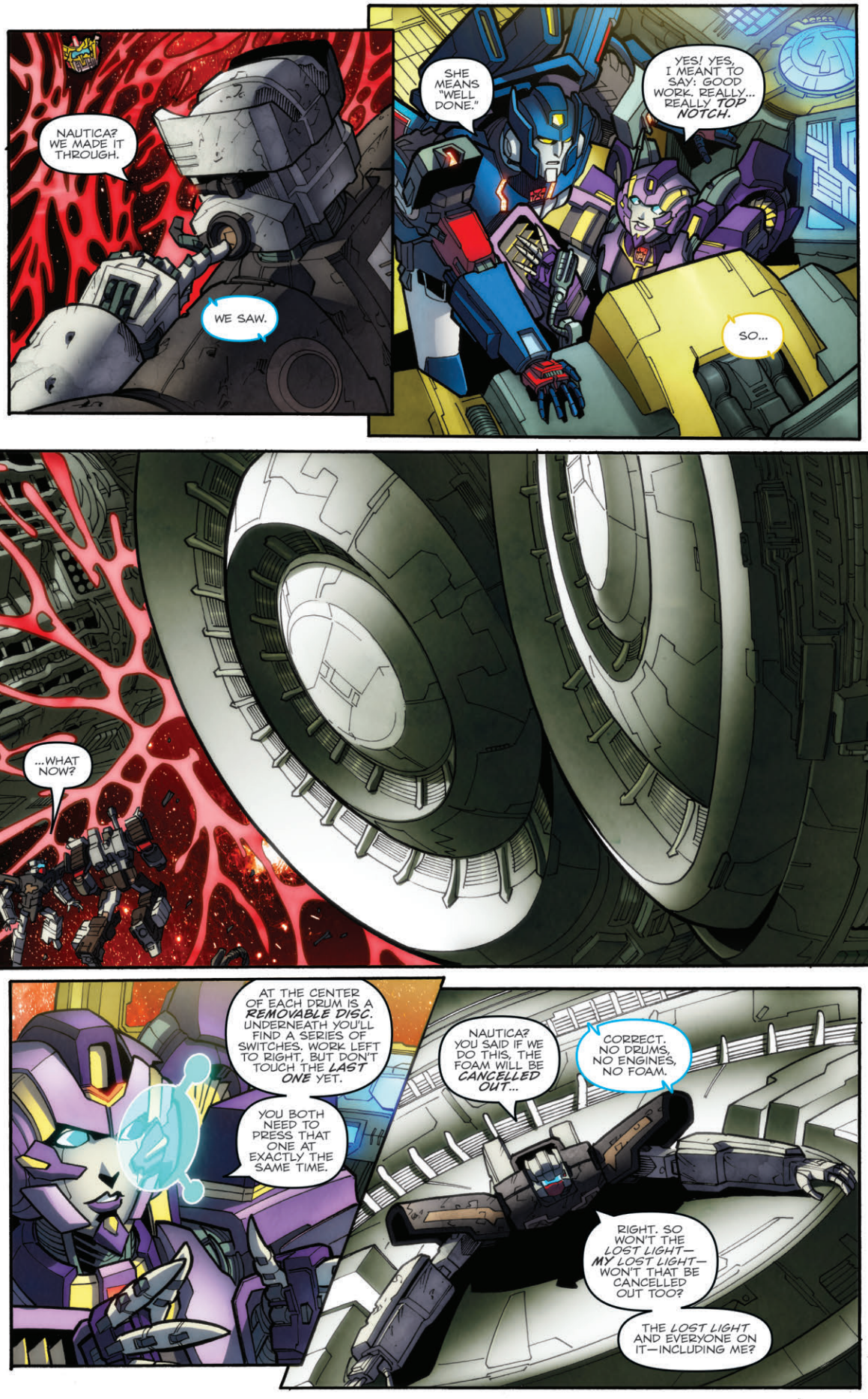
BRAINSTORM...?
OH NO.

ALL THIS TIME AND I NEVER KNEW HE HAD A MOUTH. HE NEVER TOOK OFF HIS FACEPLATE...
YEAH...

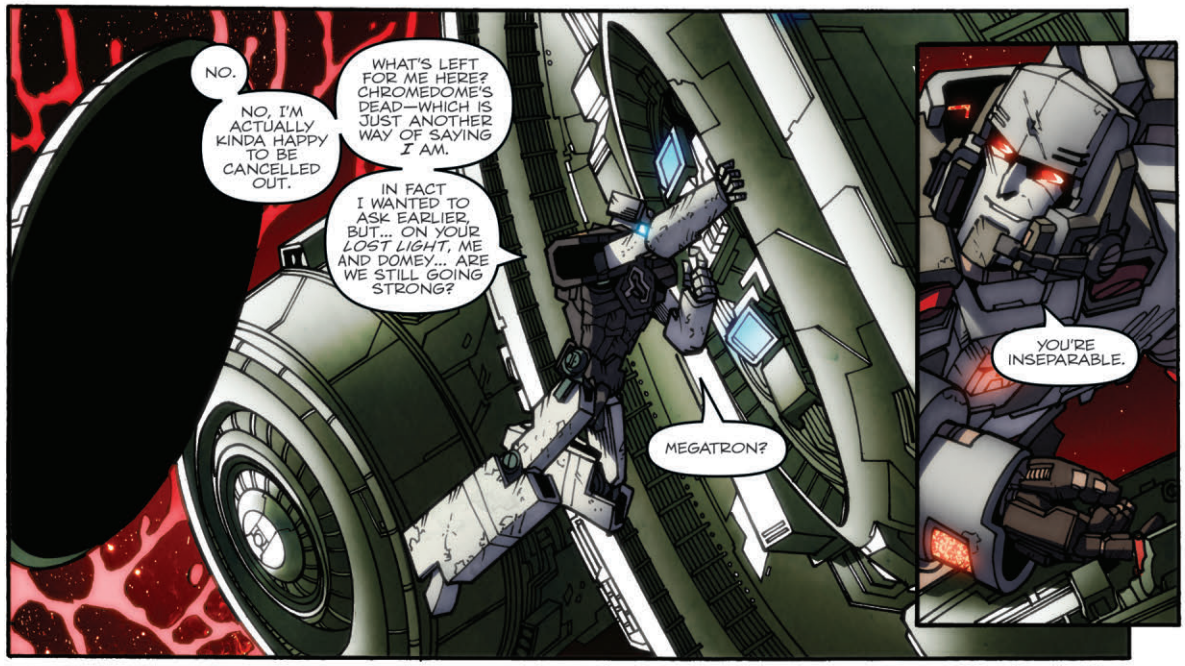
...I THINK THERE'S A GOOD REASON FOR THAT.
NO.
THAT'S BEEN—
NO, NO, NO. THAT'S BEEN PLANTED.
THEY'VE DONE THAT. THE D.J.D.
THEY PLANTED IT.
TRAITOR!
SKATCH
DON'T WASTE YOUR ANGER ON HIM. HE'S DEAD.
LUCKY ESCAPE.
DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
NO. I DON'T KNOW ALL OUR UNDERCOVER AGENTS. TO BE HONEST, HE'S NOT OUR USUAL TYPE.
THERE'S A TYPE?
HM.
HAVE YOU NEVER BEEN APPROACHED?


LOOK—THE SMALLIFICATION MACHINE CLEARLY ISN'T HERE.
MAYBE THIS BACKSTABBING, DOUBLE-CROSSING VERSION OF BRAINSTORM NEVER GOT 'ROUND TO INVENTING IT. TOO BUSY BLOWING KISSES AT THE D.J.D.
I HATE TO SPELL OUT THE OBVIOUS—ALTHOUGH I'M SURE IT HAPPENS TO YOU A LOT—BUT IF THIS BRAINSTORM WAS A DOUBLE AGENT...
...SO WAS YOURS.
I SHOULD HAVE ASKED YOU THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE: HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GET RID OF THE NANOCONS INSIDE MAGNUS?
DOMESTICATED SCRAPLETS. ONCE THEY'D HUNTED DOWN THE NANOS WE GOT RID OF THEM BY FLOODING MAGNUS WITH LIQUID ANTIVIRALS.
THAT'S WHEN WE FOUND OUT ABOUT MINIMUS AMBUS...
OKAY, SO NO MASS DISPLACEMENT GUN.
ANYONE GOT ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW WE SAVE THE DAY?
YES.
ONE.
I USED TO TURN INTO A HANDGUN. ONCE YOUR SPARK'S BEEN MODIFIED TO COPE WITH MASS DISPLACEMENT YOU CAN'T UN-MODIFY IT, SO...
BRILLIANT! AND—SURPRISING.
THANK YOU.
I'M SORRY, YOU'VE ONLY JUST THIS SECOND REMEMBERED YOU CAN DOWNSIZE?
OH, I COULD'VE SAID SOMETHING EARLIER, BUT HERE'S A SURVIVAL TIP:
WHEN EVERYONE'S LINING UP TO MAKE SACRIFICES...

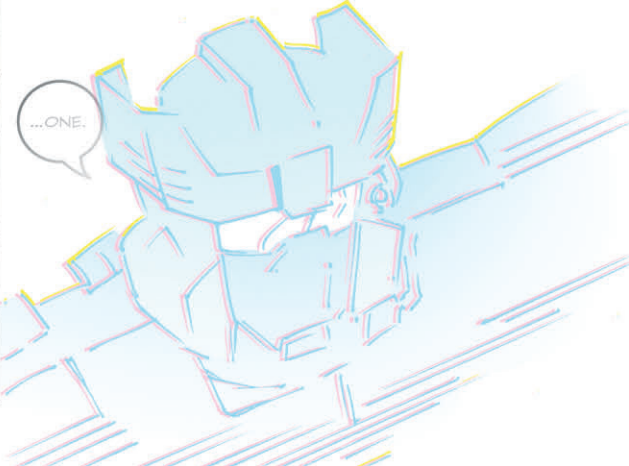

"...ALWAYS GET TO THE BACK OF THE QUEUE."
YOU SHOULD GO FIRST.
YOU'RE STILL SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN ME, SO THERE'S A GREATER CHANCE OF YOU TOUCHING THE FOAM AND EXPLODING—
—AND IF THAT HAPPENS, THERE'S NO POINT IN ME PUTTING MY OWN LIFE AT RISK.
AND EVERYONE SAYS YOU WERE THE KINDHEARTED ONE.
"WERE"?
SHH. LET ME CONCENTRATE.
OKAY. NICE ONE.
MY TURN.
ARE THESE GAPS GETTING SMALLER?
YES—THE WEB APPEARS TO BE CONTRACTING.
HERE. TAKE MY HAND.
QUICKLY.


NAUTICA? WE MADE IT THROUGH.
WE SAW.
SHE MEANS "WELL DONE."
YES! YES, I MEANT TO SAY: GOOD WORK. REALLY... REALLY TOP NOTCH.
SO...
...WHAT NOW?
AT THE CENTER OF EACH DRUM IS A REMOVABLE DISC. UNDERNEATH YOU'LL FIND A SERIES OF SWITCHES. WORK LEFT TO RIGHT, BUT DON'T TOUCH THE LAST ONE YET.
YOU BOTH NEED TO PRESS THAT ONE AT EXACTLY THE SAME TIME.
NAUTICA? YOU SAID IF WE DO THIS, THE FOAM WILL BE CANCELLED OUT...
CORRECT. NO DRUMS, NO ENGINES, NO FOAM.
RIGHT. SO WON'T THE LOST LIGHT— MY LOST LIGHT— WON'T THAT BE CANCELLED OUT TOO?
THE LOST LIGHT AND EVERYONE ON IT—INCLUDING ME?

NAUTICA? HAVE I GOT THAT WRONG?
NO, I THINK—
I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT. AND WHAT'S MORE... I THINK OUR *LOST LIGHT* MIGHT BE REINSTATED. CREW AND ALL.
I'M ***SORRY***. THERE'S NO WAY THE TWO SHIPS CAN ***CO-EXIST***, EVEN IF ONE CREW WERE DEAD AND THE OTHER WERE ALIVE...
REWIND—DO YOU WANT TO TURN BACK?


NO.
NO, I'M ACTUALLY KINDA HAPPY TO BE CANCELLED OUT.
WHAT'S LEFT FOR ME HERE? CHROMEDOME'S DEAD—WHICH IS JUST ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING *I* AM.
IN FACT I WANTED TO ASK EARLIER, BUT... ON YOUR *LOST LIGHT*, ME AND DOMEY... ARE WE STILL GOING STRONG?
MEGATRON?
YOU'RE INSEPARABLE.

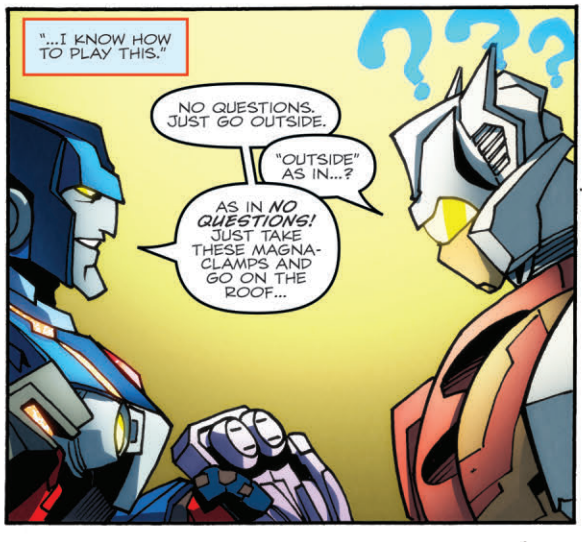
COME ON, THEN. LAST SWITCH. LET'S NOT DRAG OUT THE GOODBYES.
ON THE COUNT OF THREE...
...TWO...


...ONE.

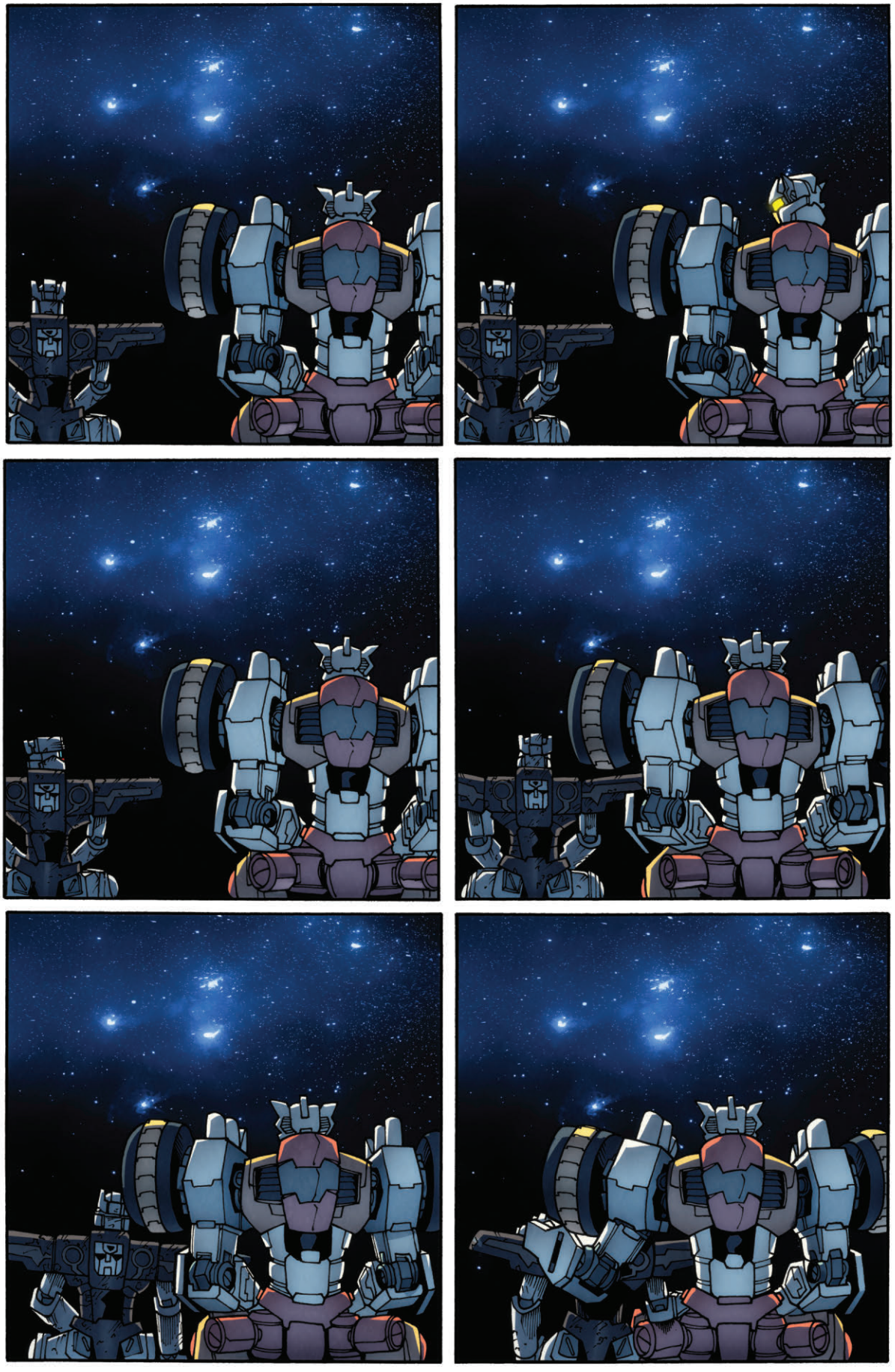
EPILOGUE 1

LATER.
JUST AS NAUTICA PREDICTED: EVERYTHING'S CHANGING BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS...
...WELL, THE WAY IT WAS A FEW HOURS AGO.
MIND TELLING ME WHAT HAPPENED?
SHORT VERSION? YOU DISAPPEARED AND THEN CAME BACK—ALL IN ONE PIECE.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS? HOUND, HIGHBROW...
INCOMING. PEOPLE ARE RETURNING IN REVERSE ORDER: THE LAST TO GO ARE THE FIRST TO COME BACK.

AH. THERE'S CHROMEDOME NOW...
DON'T WORRY...
WHAT DO WE TELL HIM?


"...I KNOW HOW TO PLAY THIS."
NO QUESTIONS. JUST GO OUTSIDE.
"OUTSIDE" AS IN...?
AS IN NO QUESTIONS! JUST TAKE THESE MAGNA-CLAMPS AND GO ON THE ROOF...

"SOMEONE'S WAITING FOR YOU."



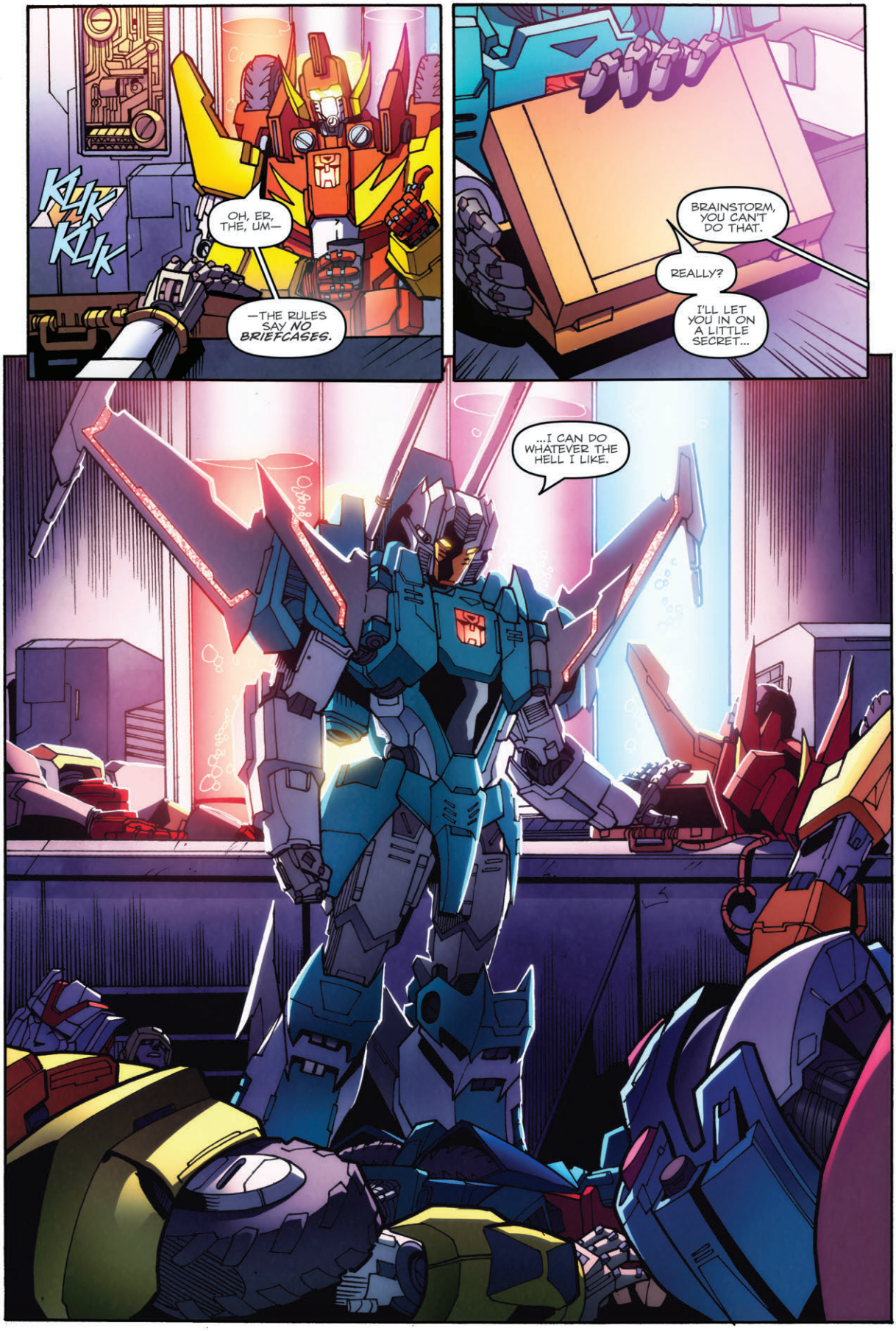
GOOD NEWS—UNLESS I'M MISREADING THIS RADAR, THE *LOST LIGHT* HAS REMATERIALIZED.
E.T.A.?
US TO THEM? IN THIS THING?
COUPLE OF HOURS. I CAN CALL AHEAD...
YES—ON AN ***ENCRYPTED FREQUENCY***. I WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH RODIMUS IN PRIVATE.
THINKING ABOUT BRAINSTORM?
HM. I NEED TO TELL RODIMUS THAT HE HAS A DECEPTICON ON BOARD.
SO DO YOU.
...
DON'T WORRY. I'M HAPPY TO MAKE MY WAY BACK TO EARTH.
OR... YOU COULD STAY.
AS YOUR PRISONER?
AS MY ***ALLY***. YOU'VE SEEN WHAT THE D.J.D. ARE CAPABLE OF. YOU'VE SEEN THE ***DARK SIDE*** OF THE DECEPTICON CAUSE.
DO YOU STILL WANT TO BE PART OF IT?
SINCE YOU'RE SO SMART, TELL ME THIS:
IF THE BROKEN *LOST LIGHT* WAS CANCELLED OUT AND ITS ***CREW*** WAS CANCELLED OUT, HOW COME REWIND SURVIVED?
I'VE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I'M TEMPTED TO SAY ***POWER OF LOVE***...
...EXCEPT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN HOW I'VE MANAGED TO HOLD ONTO ***THIS***.

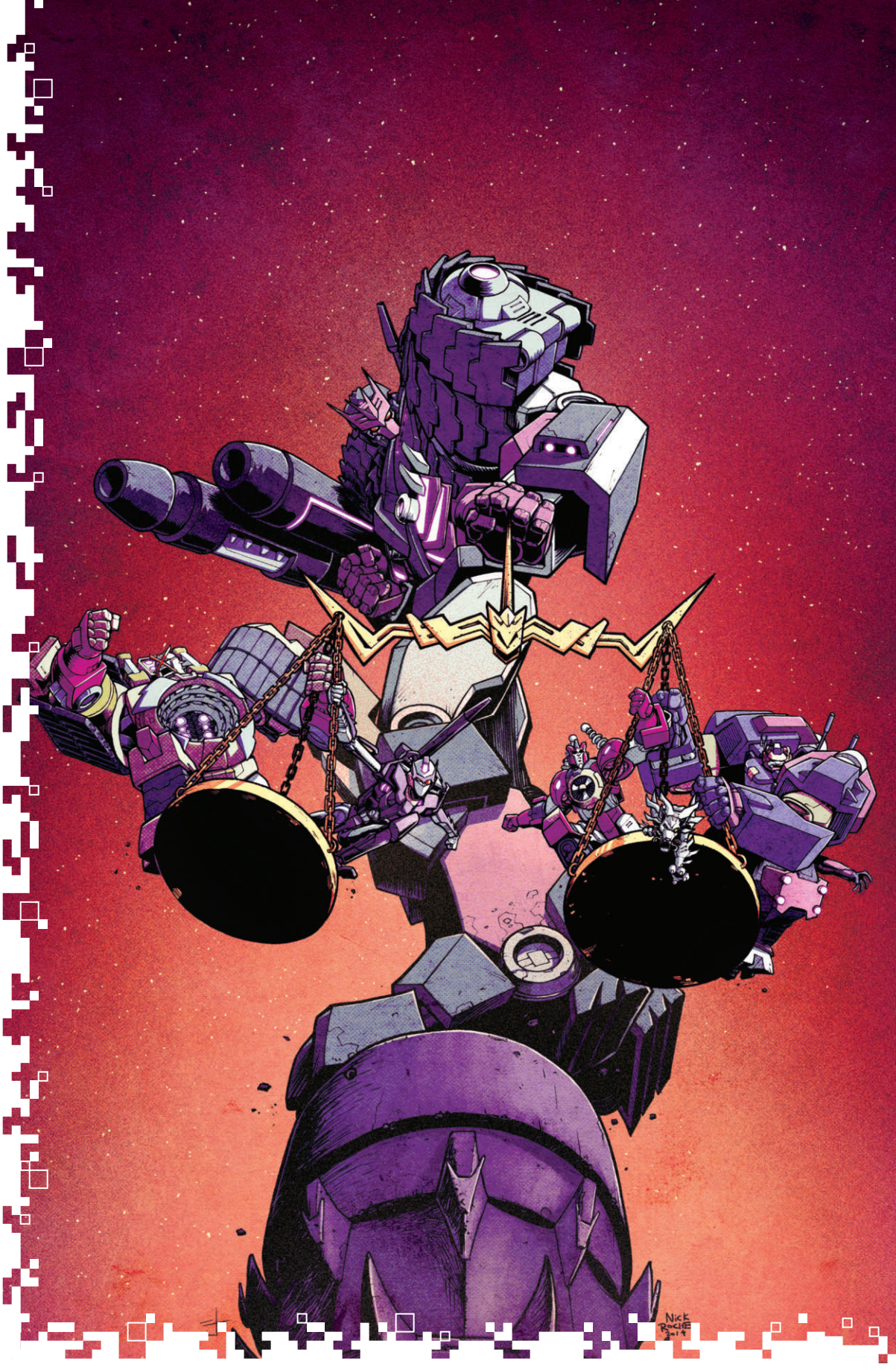
EPILOGUE 2

SWERVE'S.
'SCUSE ME.
D'YOU MIND IF I–?
'SCUSE ME.
THANKS.
SORRY.
THANKS.

SO BUSY...!
EVERYONE'S CELEBRATING— THE LOST LIGHT'S BACK! DUNNO WHAT BROKE, BUT SOMEONE'S FIXED IT—

—AND I'LL DRINK TO THAT.
YES— HERE'S TO FIXING THINGS.


KLIK KLIK
OH, ER, THE, UM—
—THE RULES SAY NO BRIEFCASES.
BRAINSTORM, YOU CAN'T DO THAT.
REALLY?
I'LL LET YOU IN ON A LITTLE SECRET...
...I CAN DO WHATEVER THE HELL I LIKE.



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #33 COVER B

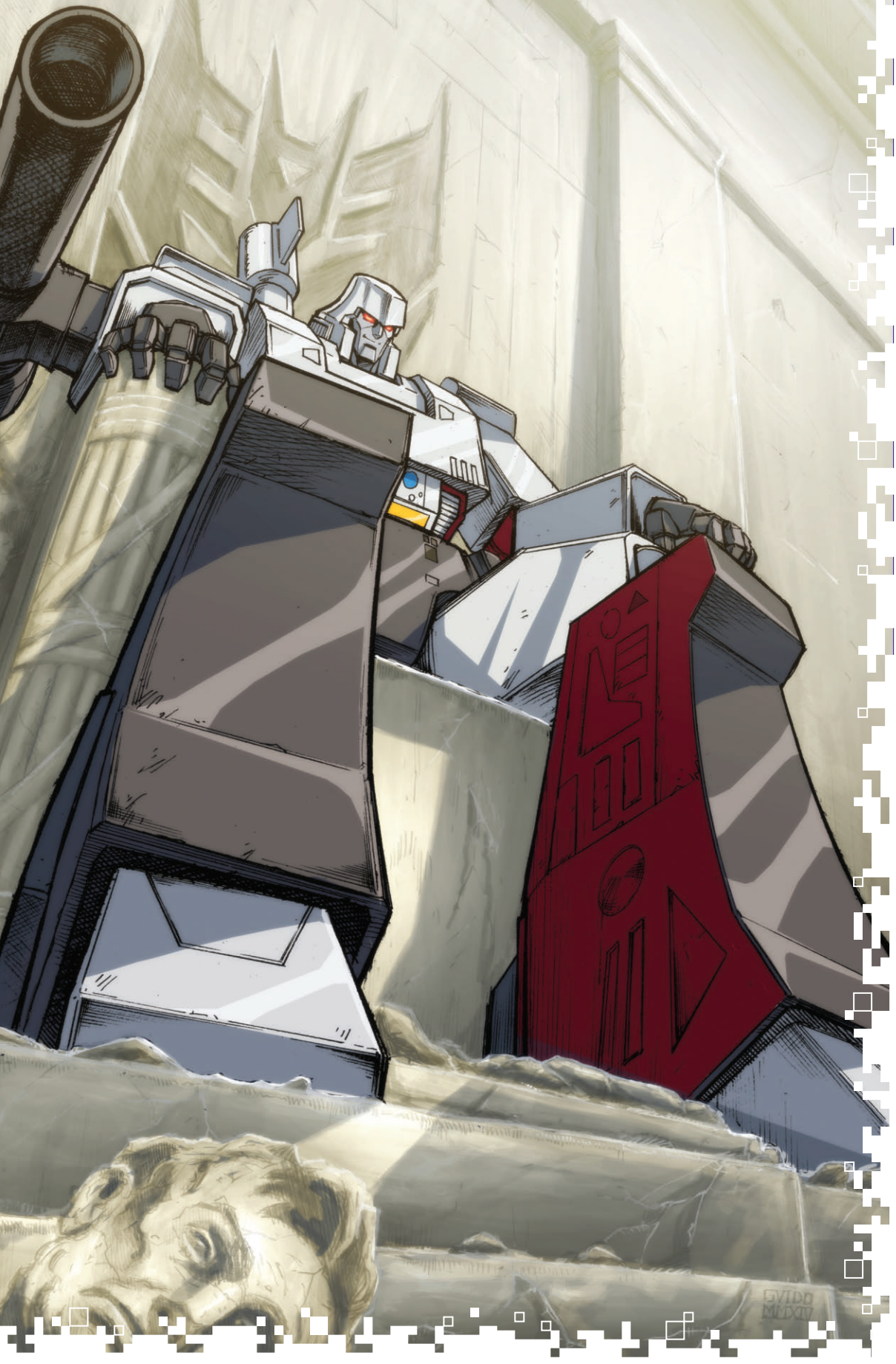
by **NICK ROCHE** Colors by **JOSH BURCHAM**

□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #28 COVER RI

by **LIVIO RAMONDELLI**

□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #29 COVER RI

by **MARCELO MATERE** Colors by **PRISCILLA TRAMONTANO**

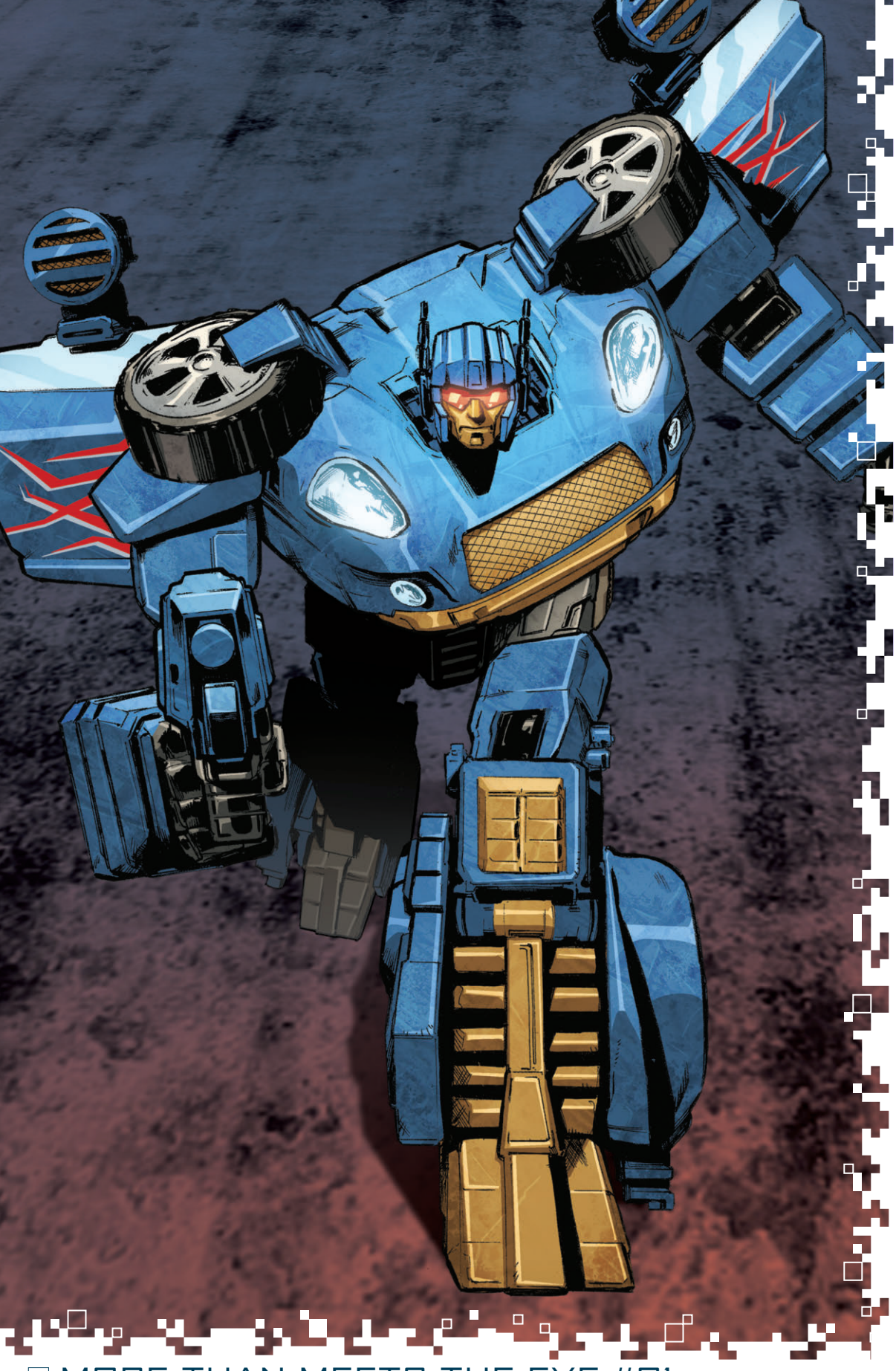


☐ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #30 COVER RI

by **GUIDO GUIDI** Colors by **JOHN-PAUL BOVE**

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #31 COVER B

by **NICK ROCHE** Colors by **JOSH BURCHAM**



□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #31 COVER RI

by **PHIL JEMENEZ** Colors by **ROMULO FAJARDO, JR.**

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #32 COVER RI

by **CASEY W. COLLER** Colors by **JOHN-PAUL BOVE**

□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #33 COVER RI

by **SARAH STONE**

MEGATRON assumes control of the quest to find the Knights of Cybertron—a quest that has never before been so urgent, so personal, and so likely to end in tears. But the crew of the *Lost Light* isn't so eager to follow his orders and, as is always the case, past decisions will come back to bite them. Collects issues #28–33.